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130944

Contents

On the Prize Essay • Jonathan Culler • v

Andrew J. Kappel Prize essay:
Elizabeth Bishop's Calling • Heather Cass White • 117

Confession and Autobiography in James Merrill's Early Poetry • Timothy Materer • 150

Classicism and Colonial Retrenchment in W. B. Yeats's "No Second Troy" • Martin McKinsey • 174

Toward a Theory of Rhetoric: Ralph Ellison, Kenneth Burke, and the Problem of Modernism • Robert Genter • 191

Catholicism, Character, and the Invention of the Liberal Novel Tradition • Marina MacKay • 215

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Contents

48.3 Fall 2002

The Ethnographer's Story:
Mama Day and the Specter of Relativism 239
Robin Blyn

Mason & Dixon & the Ampersand 264
Samuel Cohen

"Your Thoughts Make Shape Like Snow":
Louis MacNeice on Stephen Spender 292
Richard Danson Brown

Heroes and Homosexuals:
Education and Empire in E. M. Forster 324
Quentin Bailey

Across the Widest Gulf:
Nonhuman Subjectivity in Virginia Woolf's *Flush* 348
Craig Smith

Submissions

Twentieth-Century Literature welcomes the submission of new scholarly essays on any aspect of literature written in the twentieth century. Essays should be prepared in accordance with the *MLA Style Manual,* 2nd ed. Send your essay as an e-mail attachment to Twentieth-Century.Literature @Hofstra.edu. Or mail three hard copies to Twentieth-Century Literature, 107 Hofstra University, Hempstead NY 11549-1070. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return.

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Contents

48.4 Winter 2002

Virginia Woolf in the Pay of Booksellers:
Commerce, Privacy, Professionalism, *Orlando* 363
Patrick Collier

Speculation, Tourism, and *The Professor's House* 393
Paula Kot

Aldous Huxley's Americanization
of the *Brave New World* Typescript 427
Jerome Meckier

The "Woman of No Appearance":
James Joyce, Dora Marsden, and Competitive Pilfering 461
Thaine Stearns

Alyse Gregory, Scofield Thayer, and the *Dial* 487
Barbara Ozieblo

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Elizabeth Bishop's Calling

Heather Cass White

> *Call* evidently marks a distance. Unlike a whisper or a murmur, or even plain *speaking,* it puts space between the calling one and the called not merely to emphasize what separates the two but also to signal a special kind of intimacy. The call implies a familiarity which does not consist in repeated acts of loyalty but, often, in strife and combat.
>
> —Donald Wesling and Tadeusz Slawek (31)

> "Love should be put into action!"
> screamed the old hermit.
> Across the pond an echo
> Tried and tried to confirm it.
>
> —Elizabeth Bishop (8)[1]

This essay considers Elizabeth Bishop's developing figures of vocation through two poems that respond to the scene of natural instruction told in the Boy of Winander story in book 5 of the *Prelude*. Bishop's deep reading of Wordsworth is well known; one of her most notorious self-characterizations occurs in a 1952 letter to Robert Lowell in which she says of her new book, "on reading what I've got on hand I find I'm really a minor female Wordsworth—at least, I don't know anyone else who seems to be such a nature lover" (*One Art* 222). Bishop's identification with Wordsworth, like her much-discussed love for George Herbert, is both an important coordinate in reading her work and a slight dodge, to be read warily. Never comfortable with direct competition, Bishop inclined publicly to relate herself to poets distant in time and manner, leaving her intense readings of contemporaries implicit.[2] In this case, however, a fuller understanding of her relationship to the idea of vocation in Wordsworth involves rather than displaces an understanding of her relationship to her contemporaries.[3] It was in part the challenge of that latter relationship, I will argue, that allowed Bishop at the end of her career to fully inhabit the ambition to be "major" that she associated with her reading of Wordsworth.

Her responses to "The Boy of Winander" in particular are important in understanding how Bishop saw herself as both a postromantic and a post–World War II poet. Her central dilemma in both contexts concerns how strongly she was able to imagine her own vocation as a poet; she had to conceive a calling as confident and richly figured as the one Wordsworth imagines in "The Boy of Winander," but one that also addressed all the skepticism of a time in which the innovations of modernism and the ravages of two world wars had combined to ironize those figures. One history of her thoughts on the call to poetic invention may be read in the gulf between the two of her poems that I take to respond most directly to "The Boy of Winander" and its idea of lyric invocation. The first of these is "Chemin de Fer," written in 1946; the second is "The Moose," written over the course of 20 years but published finally in 1972. The first poem is as bleak as any Bishop ever wrote, hardly daring to imagine a world in which lyric speech matters, while the second offers as gloriously full an image of lyric fulfillment as American poetry has produced in the last century. That fulfillment marks Bishop's realization of a new scene of poetic calling, one initiated not by the poet's voice but by her capacity to listen.

Most critics who have written about Bishop and Wordsworth agree, in part at the suggestion of the letter I have quoted above, that for Bishop Wordsworth is an emblem for a masculine, expansive, myth-making poetry that contrasts starkly with the poetry that she admired and wrote. They assert further that Bishop's poetry is morally and politically superior to Wordsworth's in trading his undisguised ambition and egotism for a more "modest" poetry that makes smaller demands, finds success in smaller victories, and puts the poet on a more egalitarian footing with the world and other people. Jeredith Merrin's reading is exemplary in this respect; she writes:

> Limited productivity can hardly be said to have been a part of Bishop's poetic plan; yet there are ways in which her oeuvre may

> be seen as more purposefully "minor." Bishop's distaste for egocentricity and "major" philosophical volubility is apparent in her journal. Her extreme personal reticence makes the notion of an unabashedly autobiographical long poem, a Bishop *Prelude*, risible. (85–86)[4]

Merrin further quotes in support of this idea a passage from a 1965 interview in which Bishop is asked if a poet needs a "myth" to sustain her work, to which Bishop replies, "It all depends—some poets do, some don't. The question, I must admit, doesn't interest me a great deal. I'm not interested in big-scale work as such. Something needn't be large to be good" (86).

I shall claim that critics have in effect read Bishop's statement that "something needn't be large to be good" too literally, underestimating the scope and ambition of Bishop's idea of "good" poetry. That scope, I will argue, includes the specifically Wordsworthian goal of inventing figures that merge, in Geoffrey Hartman's words, "the supernatural and the naturalized . . . imaginations" (267), in which

> as a man and a massive nature coalesce, our sense for "margins" or intermediate horizons is increased. It is as if these approximations could extend infinitely, man and nature drawing imperceptibly, gently, closer. (201)

Bishop's poetry shares with Wordsworth's the aim to create such figures as assertions of the poet's power in the face of doubt and discontinuity. Reading Bishop as, finally, an affirmative poet may seem willfully counterintuitive; the sense of dislocation and loss that underlies her poetry at every stage and makes reading her letters frequently hard going is amply documented and plain to see. However, it is because this tension is so articulate that it is doubly reductive to claim that Bishop's ambitions are self-consciously "minor," as does Merrin in her discussion of "Poem":

> In a voice cautiously restrained—as though to indicate that the best defense against despair is not to "dare to hope" too extravagantly, as Wordsworth does, but rather to hope for as little as possible (since so little seems possible)—Bishop expresses gratitude for the small miracle of coincident "looks." And that small miracle . . . is all, the poet makes us feel, that nature or that her post-Romantic poetry has to offer. (92)

To characterize Bishop in "Poem" as primarily grateful for a "small miracle" is to overlook the history of lyric work by which the poet has made herself capable of generating that miracle, and to make "Poem" the story of Bishop's poetry is to overlook her consistent claims to such power. Asserting Bishop's ambition is especially important in light of her own tendency to alternate, in letters and interviews, between disowning any ambition and anxiously accounting for her (relatively) small body of finished work. Her interview with George Starbuck, published in 1977, is a case in point. In a passage also cited by Merrin, Bishop says, "I know I wish I had written a great deal more. Sometimes I think that if I had been born a man I probably would have written more. Dared more, or been able to spend more time at it. I've wasted a great deal of time" (Schwartz and Estess 329). It may be true that gender got in the way of productivity for Bishop; it is certain that drinking and depression did. In any case, however, to insist that the limitations in size, quantity, or daring of her finished work are its virtues is to dishonor the goals toward which Bishop worked as a poet. Additionally, it comes perilously close to repeating the old and, to Bishop, tiresome segregation between what constitutes poetic success for a man and for a woman.

Holding the universe alone

"Chemin de Fer" is the sixth poem in Bishop's first book, *North & South*, though it was written in 1945, after that book had already been accepted for publication. Written late but inserted early, the poem's position in the volume reflects its curious status in Bishop's early work. It is a slight poem, especially when compared to such immediately major poems as "The Monument," "Roosters," and "The Fish." Nevertheless, "Chemin de Fer" is the first of many poems to come in which Bishop figures calling as having mixed results, a motif as pervasive and important as her exploration of geography begun in the better-known "The Map." "Chemin de Fer" announces Bishop as a poet to whom questions of calling matter, and who sees those questions as placing her in the company of an older, masculine literary tradition. The call in Bishop's work is concerned with the invocation that Jonathan Culler describes as the figure by which the romantic poets established themselves as sublime poets, testifying to their own power through the figure of apostrophe. He writes:

> We might posit, then, a . . . level of reading where the vocative of apostrophe is a device which the poetic voice uses to establish with an object a relationship which helps to constitute [the poet]. The object is treated as a subject, an *I* which implies a certain type of *you* in its turn. One who successfully invokes nature is one to whom nature might, in its turn, speak. He makes himself a poet, visionary. Thus, invocation is a figure of vocation. (142).

Often Bishop engages this mode of self-assertion in order to mock its pretensions, particularly in the early poems, in which militaristic roosters scream "this is where I live!" (36) and a dour lighthouse has something "strongly worded to say" (40) about hell in the midst of the heavenly "Seascape." Nevertheless, she does not disown apostrophe's visionary impulse so much as understand instances of calling as more reciprocal figures for vocation. As I will argue, over the course of Bishop's work her invocations become more confident and successful as her figures for listening and apprehension become more precise.

They achieve precision, however, by keeping in mind the twin threats of failed and adversarial communication. The possibilities for a breakdown of intelligibility and a destructive clash of wills haunt the acts of calling in Bishop's poems as they haunt all instances of the "special kind of intimacy" Wesling and Slawek describe. That intimacy, in which the poet is called to respond to the world, to understand it and answer it and work in its service, and the poet calls back to show that she is called and can answer in kind, is a particular site of anxiety for Bishop. "Chemin de Fer" constitutes a spare and pointed sketch of that anxiety as Bishop reflects on what she has achieved in *North & South:*

> Alone on the railroad track
> I walked with pounding heart.
> The ties were too close together
> or maybe too far apart.
>
> The scenery was impoverished:
> scrub-pine and oak; beyond
> its mingled gray-green foliage
> I saw the little pond

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where the dirty hermit lives,
    lie like an old tear
holding on to its injuries
    lucidly year after year.

The hermit shot off his shot-gun
    and the tree by the cabin shook.
Over the pond went a ripple.
    The pet hen went chook-chook.

"Love should be put into action!"
    screamed the old hermit.
Across the pond an echo
    tried and tried to confirm it.   (8)

The complexity of the last stanza's gesture becomes apparent when it is set next to its immediate predecessor, Robert Frost's "The Most of It." That poem begins:

He thought he kept the universe alone;
For all the voice in answer he could wake
Was but the mocking echo of his own
From some tree-hidden cliff across the lake.
Some morning from the boulder-broken beach
He would cry out on life, that what it wants
Is not its own love back in copy speech,
But counter-love, original response.   (338)

Frost's caller never does find a human companion, but his call is followed by the appearance of an "embodiment":

As a great buck it powerfully appeared,
Pushing the crumpled water up ahead,
And landed pouring like a waterfall,
And stumbled through the rocks with horny tread,
And forced the underbrush—and that was all.   (338)

In what will grow to be a characteristic Bishop move, "Chemin de Fer" radically scales down everything it borrows from Frost. For his majestic pentameter it trades five quatrains of loose common-meter. Frost's poem has one human voice in it, that considers the "universe" from a "boulder-broken beach"; Bishop's first-person narrator watches her feet while walking along railroad tracks through "impoverished" scenery. However, Bishop's poem does not diminish the violence with which Frost imbues the need to evoke a response from the world. Frost's solitary caller finds a complement in the mute, masculine stag "forc[ing] the underbrush." If the stag's appearance affirms the caller's desire to evoke a response, it also exposes the heedless and destructive impulse behind that wish, an impulse that can effect its will, but "that [is] all."[5] In this way Frost's poem is itself a response to both "The Boy of Winander" and "Nutting," suggesting that the boy's efforts in the former poem to make the owls respond to him is less an expression of his communion with nature than an uncomfortably close ally to the young man's rapacious desire in the latter. Bishop, already the poet of "Roosters," was skeptical of masculine crowing in all its forms, a skepticism palpable in her near-parodic hermit, firing his gun at nothing. At the same time, however, "Chemin de Fer" suggests not that Bishop rejects the desire to evoke response, but that she is not yet confident about what that response might be, or what kind of call might evoke it. Placing "Chemin de Fer" near the beginning of her first book, she raises the double-faced question of what the work is she has been called to do, and how powerful a call she will herself fashion. Bishop's readers know that it will be 30 years before she finds a balance of call and response subtle enough to invoke a more satisfying epiphany than Frost's stag—the majestic female moose.

Central to my argument is the idea that the "modesty" for which Bishop's work is known should not be taken at face value as an expression of the poet's limited ambition but understood, rather, as a crisis in vocation, in a specifically romantic sense of the word. Bishop's challenge was to invent a poetics that engaged the powerful claims of the romantic and especially Wordsworthian lyric to which she was drawn; at the same time, she wanted to find a way to respond to the poetic challenges of her own generation, specifically the autobiographical work of sustained dislocation being written by her friends Robert Lowell and Randall Jarrell. It was this challenge, I will suggest here, that provided the key impetus for her late poetry's successful resolution of her essentially romantic dilemma: how to figure her own vocation as a poet. In the passage quoted above, Jonathan Culler usefully delineates the sort of lyric authority Bishop sought to rework in her own image. We can see the process by which

Wordsworth "makes himself . . . visionary" at work in "The Boy of Winander," in which the poet's mind develops as he exercises his nascent will to lyric power over the natural world. The episode begins:

> There was a Boy, ye knew him well, ye Cliffs
> And Islands of Winander! many a time
> At evening, when the stars had just begun
> To move along the edges of the hills,
> Rising or setting, would he stand alone
> Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering Lake,
> And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
> Press'd closely, palm to palm, and to his mouth
> Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
> Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls
> That they might answer him. (5.389–99)[6]

The boy's call is successful, and answered by the owls who

> would shout
> Across the watry Vale, and shout again,
> Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,
> And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud,
> Redoubled and redoubled—concourse wild
> Of mirth and jocund din. (5.399–404)

Perhaps as a reward for this display, and as a promise of things to come, Nature is moved to teach young Wordsworth in return, giving him "a gentle shock of mild surprise" that

> Has carried far into his heart the voice
> Of mountain torrents, or the visible scene
> Would enter unawares into his mind
> With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
> Its woods, and that uncertain Heaven, received
> Into the bosom of the steady Lake. (5.407, 408–13)

As we have seen, Bishop's early response to this vision of the poet's calling is skeptical, if not entirely pessimistic. Wordsworth is instructed by deep and fecund silence; Bishop's hermit is mournfully serenaded by his own echo. The profound solipsism of Bishop's image reflects in part her constant anxiety over her own ability to say anything of importance.

Over and over she characterizes her poetry as "slight," by which she means removed from the social and historical engagements of her peers. During the 1930s and 40s her anxiety was underscored by the close personal and professional relationship she shared with Marianne Moore, who was herself at that time intensely committed to the moral and social relevance of her own work. Moore delicately encourages this anxiety in a letter written in 1937, warning Bishop, "you are menaced by the goodness of your mechanics." Dissatisfied with the prose sketches Bishop had been sending her, Moore says: "I am sure good treatment is a handicap unless along with it, significant values come out with an essential baldness" (*Letters* 384).

Self and "other"

Practically nothing is "essentially bald" in Bishop's poetry, but she did, with varying degrees of success, incorporate a sense of moral purpose into her idea of what a poet is and does. In particular, her extensive travels in South America inflected her figures for poetic vocation with questions of cultural difference, of the lasting consequences of historical injustice, and of the pernicious effects of social inequality. The clearest example of this inflection occurs in "Brazil, January 1, 1502," written in 1958. In this poem Bishop juxtaposes the artist's desire to make nature legible with the Crusaders' desire to make the jungles of Brazil conform to their idea of Christian morality. The poem's first stanza takes its hint from the epigraph, ". . . embroidered nature . . . tapestried landscape," describing the jungle of Brazil as a piece of needlework, "fresh as if just finished / and taken off the frame" (91). Into this aestheticized world come the zealous Christians who see in it a vision of fallen Eden where "in the foreground there is Sin." The final stanza depicts the consequences of the Christians' readiness to read the old world into the new:

> Just so the Christians, hard as nails, tiny as nails, and glinting,
> in creaking armor, came and found it all,
> not unfamiliar:
> no lovers' walks, no bowers,
> no cherries to be picked, no lute music,
> but corresponding, nevertheless,
> to an old dream of wealth and luxury

> already out of style when they left home—
> wealth, plus a brand-new pleasure.
> Directly after mass, humming perhaps
> *L'Homme armé* or some such tune,
> they ripped away into the hanging fabric,
> each out to catch an Indian for himself—
> those maddening little women who kept calling,
> calling to each other (or had the birds waked up?)
> and retreating, always retreating, behind it. (92)

Bishop's juxtaposition of the poet's impulse to turn the jungle into art history with the Christians' to "civilize" it suggests that whenever the poet confronts the world and demands that it respond to her in a language she understands, she may be both morally and aurally obtuse. Specifically, she may be doomed to misunderstand the call of the world itself, figured in this poem as the sound of the elusive native women, "calling, / calling to each other."

The issue of how to hear the world rather than simply drown it out with the sound of one's own voice is one of the main questions in *Questions of Travel*, the book Bishop was writing when she wrote to Lowell about being a minor female Wordsworth. In the title poem she asks, "is it right to be watching strangers in a play / in this strangest of theaters?" The poem never decides fully, but it does note the educational value of this watching for the watcher. "Surely it would be a pity," the poet reasons,

> —Not to have had to stop for gas and heard
> the sad, two-noted, wooden tune
> of disparate wooden clogs
> carelessly clacking
> . . . .
> —A pity not to have heard
> the other, less primitive music of the fat brown bird
> who sings above the broken gasoline pump
> in a bamboo church of Jesuit baroque:
> three towers, five silver crosses.
> —Yes, a pity not to have pondered,
> blurr'dly and inconclusively,
> on what connection can exist for centuries

> between the crudest wooden footwear
> and, careful and finicky,
> the whittled fantasies of wooden cages.
> —Never to have studied history in
> the weak calligraphy of songbirds' cages. (93–94)

One reason not to stay at home, for this traveler, is the opportunity travel has given her to sharpen her ability to learn history as she notes decoration. In this case the history of colonialism transforms her otherwise haphazard observations into allegory: the primitive echo of the wooden footwear suggests the missionaries who constructed elaborate cages for the less primitive brown birds. This is an insight worth having constructed, and answers some of her earlier doubts about the wisdom of "rush[ing] to see the sun the other way around" (93). Perhaps most importantly, the lessons of travel give the traveler her final sense that each individual is alone, at home nowhere, but also maybe at home anywhere. The poem ends in "a sudden golden silence"

> in which the traveller takes a notebook, writes:
> *"Is it lack of imagination that makes us come*
> *to imagined places, not just stay at home?*
> *Or could Pascal have been not entirely right*
> *about just sitting quietly in one's room?*
>
> *Continent, city, country, society:*
> *the choice is never wide and never free.*
> *And here, or there . . . No. Should we have stayed at home,*
> *wherever that may be?"* (94)

In this way the poem concludes that the benefit of travel to the traveler is its destabilizing influence, the sense in which it makes it more rather than less difficult to locate one's "home." The narrator of this poem learns from travel because she has learned how to listen; she engages the world by becoming receptive to its voices. However, rather like the conquistadors in "Brazil, January 1, 1502," the narrator of "Questions of Travel" ends in a fundamental solipsism: the poet retreats into a journal, a space in which the experiences of travel can be translated into an already-known language of philosophical speculation. Ending the poem in this way suggests that while the traveler has learned about history and geography, her sense of a stable selfhood to which she can retire at will remains intact. While the poem wonders about the rightness of watching others as if they were actors in a play, it has not yet come into the possibility, explored rigorously in *Geography III*, that the poet may be "other" to herself, also to be watched carefully. It also suggests that however far into the world the poet goes, she will not only return to herself, but return to a self unchanged.

This solipsism is an aesthetic limitation, as it restricts the possible responses to be called out of the world. If the only respondent is, ultimately, the familiar self, where is there room for epiphany? Lyric invocation requires a response from the world that is not the self, the "counter-love, original response" that Frost longed for and Wordsworth got. For all its emphasis on the traveler's desire to "look and look [her] infant sight away" (59), the "Brazil" section of *Questions of Travel* does not overcome its limitation by addressing a cultural "other," the poor of Rio. Whatever Bishop's personal interests may have been in countering the effects of social inequality, the poetry is most successful when its addresses are written from within social paradigms clearly demarcated by class.[7] Her poems of address to the poor only work when they are clearly typed as "other" than the poet; "Manuelzhino," for example, is a good poem in the way that "The Riverman" is not. Both poems are, uncharacteristically for Bishop, first-person monologues. "Manuelzhino" adopts the cutting, exasperated, simultaneously furious and helpless voice of Lota (the "friend" identified in the poem's note) as she talks to and about her employee, Manuelzhino. The poem is funny and sharp, full of good lines, as when the narrator tells Manuelzhino that he is "supposed / to supply me with vegetables, / but you don't; or you won't; or you can't / get the idea through your brain— / the world's worst gardener since Cain." The poem combines its facility with a joke with the best of Bishop's fanciful observations:

> briskly, you come to settle
> what we call our "accounts,"
> . . . .
> Immediate confusion.
> You've left out the decimal points.
> Your columns stagger,
> honeycombed with zeroes.

> You whisper conspiratorially;
> the numbers mount to millions.
> Account books? They are Dream Books.
> In the kitchen we dream together
> how the meek shall inherit the earth—
> or several acres of mine. (98)

The strength of the poem's address is its frankness; the speaker reflects on the condescension inherent in her attitude toward Manuelzhino without challenging it.[8] As a poem of calling, then, it is both effective and limited. While it is an example of light and sure rhetorical control, it has, lyrically, nowhere in particular to go. It has already decided what kind of answer Manuelzhino is capable of so it doesn't bother to elicit one, ending instead with an inward-directed exhortation:

> You helpless, foolish old man,
> I love you all I can,
> I think. Or do I?
> I take off my hat, unpainted
> and figurative, to you.
> Again I promise to try. (99)

The poems that try to bridge the gaps that "Manuelzhino" acknowledges are the least interesting. "The Riverman," for example, in which the speaker is a man from an Amazon village who wants to become a witch doctor, contains some of the few genuinely dead lines in Bishop's work: "I know some things already / but it will take years of study, / it is all so difficult;" "I sincerely desire to be / a serious sacaca" (107); "travelling as fast as a wish / with my magic cloak of fish / swerving as I swerve" (108). The flatness of the voice in this poem is the flatness of a bad imitation. The poet is inhabiting the riverman's voice as a tourist, and as a result there is something unpleasantly cute about his consciousness as the poet imagines it.[9] An unearned empathy is at work in this poem; it is unconvincing as imaginative self-portraiture.[10]

Alongside these poems, however, *Questions of Travel* also presents Bishop's first explicit self-portrait, the story "In the Village." This story, first published in the *New Yorker* in 1953, describes a return home from the sanitarium by Bishop's widowed mother. The narrator is a child of five, watching as her grandmother and aunts tend her mother, a mysterious, nervous woman referred to only as "she," who is having her first nonmourning dress made. The story reverses the structure of "Chemin de Fer:" like the poem, it centers on a hopeless, anguished cry, the scream of the young widow as she looks at herself in her new dress. In the story, however, the cry occurs at the beginning of the action, and the rest of the story is devoted to a circuitous examination of the effects it has on the child's life. And whereas "Chemin de Fer" imagines only the "chook-chook" of the pet hen to counter the hermit's cry, "In the Village" features a stronger alternative: while the mother's scream hollows the child out, the ringing of the village blacksmith's hammer reminds her of life going forward, full of friends, gifts, loved animals, routine, and a consoling paternal solidity. The story may be seen as a struggle between these two sounds, as the child fights to remember the latter in order not to be extinguished by the former. This conflict is set up early in the story, during the dressmaker's visit:

> Unaccustomed to having her back, the child stood now in the doorway, watching. The dressmaker was crawling around on her knees eating pins as Nebuchadnezzar had crawled eating grass. The wallpaper glinted and the elm trees outside hung heavy and green, and the straw matting smelled like the ghost of hay.
>
> Clang.
>
> *Clang.*
>
> Oh, beautiful sounds, from the blacksmith's shop at the end of the garden! Its gray roof, with patches of moss, could be seen above the lilac bushes. Nate was there—Nate, wearing a long black leather apron over his trousers and bare chest, sweating hard, a black leather cap on top of dry, thick, black-and-gray curls, a black sooty face; iron filings, whiskers, and gold teeth, all together, and a smell of red-hot metal and horses' hoofs.
>
> *Clang.*
>
> The pure note: pure and angelic.
>
> The dress was all wrong. She screamed.
>
> The child vanishes. (*Questions* 48–49)

The drama of the final image of the vanishing child is uncharacteristic of Bishop's work up to this point. In its remarkable (for Bishop) directness about a personal emotional experience, this story forms the beginning of a notable change in her stance toward self-exploration in writing. The story answers, with its emphasis on the child's "immense, sibilant, glistening loneliness" (65), an early wish of Marianne Moore's about the direction of Bishop's poetry. In 1938 Moore wrote, "I can't help wishing you would sometime in some way, risk some unprotected profundity of experience" (*Letters* 391). While the story represents such a risk, it manages it not in poetry but in prose, a genre about which Bishop had mixed feelings. When she first sent the story to the *New Yorker,* the letters to friends in which she mentions it are optimistic, predicting that it will lead her to write better poems. "I just wrote off some prose-poetry from time to time before," she writes in 1953; "I'm afraid 'In the Village' is pretty much just that too—but I am taking it more seriously and thinking about people, balancing this with that, time, etc.—and I'm hoping whatever I write will be a little less precious and 'sensitive' in the future" (*One Art* 272). By the time it was published, however, her usual anxiety had overtaken these hopes and she turned to deprecation. In a letter of 1954 she finally dismisses it with her worst judgment: "this is just poetic prose. And completely autobiographical" (*One Art* 291).

For Bishop, the close reader of *The Prelude* and the *Confessions* of St. Augustine and Rousseau, to use "autobiographical" as a deprecation is odd. Moreover, it is inconsistent, sitting strangely with her lifelong insistence on the "accuracy" of her poems in reproducing her experiences exactly as they happened. I think this dissonance is emblematic of *Questions of Travel*'s overall quandary with regard to the self as a poetic subject. Like Wordsworth, Augustine, and Rousseau, Bishop in *Questions of Travel* is intensely interested in the imaginative power of introspection, and in the epiphanic quality of scenes of childhood instruction in particular. When she takes on that material directly in "In the Village," however, the impasse at which she finds herself becomes clear. Whereas "Brazil, January 1, 1502" represented the world's call to the poet as human voices "calling, calling to each other," in "In the Village," the language of Bishop's past is figured in subarticulate sounds that are alternately too overwhelming and too ineffectual to elicit the poet's response: either that language threatens to silence her completely, like the mother's scream, or it promises to be too brief and too long past to trust, like the sound of Nate's hammer that the story ends by summoning in order to replace the memory of the scream:

> *Clang.*
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Now there is no scream. Once there was one and it settled slowly down to earth one hot summer afternoon; or did it float up, into that dark, too dark, blue sky? But surely it has gone away, forever.
>
> It sounds like a bell buoy out at sea.
>
> It is the elements speaking: earth, air, fire, water.
>
> All those other things—clothes, crumbling postcards, broken china; things damaged and lost, sickened or destroyed; even the frail almost lost scream—are they too frail for us to hear their voices very long, too mortal?
>
> Nate!
>
> Oh, beautiful sound, strike again! (77)

In this passage the narrator has become, in a length of time marked by an ellipsis, the adult poet for whom the sound of the scream "has gone away, forever." Gone too, however, is the consoling sound of Nate's hammer; in crying out to hear it again the poet is once again left in the position of the hermit, calling for an impossible response.

That peculiar affirmative

By the time Bishop published *Geography III* in 1976, the question of how to turn autobiography into lyric poetry was at the forefront of American poetics, and any number of the poems it produced were horrifying to the markedly private Bishop.[11] She mistrusted what she saw as the self-absorption of autobiographical poetry, and she also despised its bathos, as she explained to Robert Lowell in a letter of 1972. Lowell had sent her the manuscript of his book of highly personal poems, *The Dolphin*, in which he quoted liberally from the anguished letters of his ex-wife. Among her many reservations about this book, Bishop notes that:

> In general, I deplore the "confessional"—however, when you wrote *Life Studies* perhaps it was a necessary movement, and it helped make poetry more real, fresh and immediate. But now—ye gods—anything goes, and I am so sick of poems about the students' mothers & fathers and sex lives and so on.
> (*One Art* 562)

As much as Bishop may have deplored the latter outgrowths of the confessional mode, however, she felt undeniably challenged by it at the same time, particularly in the work of her friend, peer, and rival Lowell, and her frequent competitor for literary prizes, Randall Jarrell. In Jarrell's case, her competitiveness seems to have taken the form of feeling that though she was the better poet, he was making use of better subject matter. When she won the Pulitzer in 1956 she told Lowell: "I honestly feel from the bottom of my heart that it should have gone to Randall, for some of his war poems. . . . I really do seem on the frivolous side compared to him. . ." (*One Art* 319). In 1965 she writes Jarrell a long letter after receiving a copy of his autobiographical book *The Lost World*. The letter starts out by describing the book she herself is publishing at the time (*Questions of Travel)* and spends the rest of its five pages saying rather less about Jarrell's book.

How carefully she read the book, however, and to what profit, can be seen when we compare a section of its title poem, "The Lost World," with a section from Bishop's most famous autobiographical poem, "In the Waiting Room." Both poems rewrite the Wordsworthian scene of instruction, figuring early moments in the poets' introductions to self-consciousness in language, through sudden moments of interchange with the world around them. In the first of the three sections of "The Lost World," the young Jarrell finds himself in happy communion with the world as he is driven to the library. The poem describes him climbing into the back seat where he sees:

> on the back seat (sight more appealing
> than any human sight!) my own friend Lucky,
> Half wolf, half police-dog . . . "Hello,"
> I say to the lady, and hug Lucky . . . In my
> Talk with the world, in which it tells me what I know
> And I tell it, "I know—" how strange that I
> Know nothing, and yet it tells me what I know!—
> I appreciate the animals, who stand by
> Purring. Or else they sit and pant. It's so—
> So *agreeable*. If only people purred and panted! (13)

This is a singularly harmonious portrait of the budding poet's ease in moving between two worlds, the human world of books and the animal world of nonverbal communication. It is as though the boy of Winander stood and chirped at his pet canary rather than hooting at wild owls. The gesture of mastery, though, is still present in Jarrell's poem, however domesticated. The young Jarrell looks at the world, including its tame animals, and tells it what he knows; the world is agreeable because it teaches him and lets him feel powerful at the same moment.

When Bishop writes her own scene of instruction, the stakes are higher and success is riskier. Her poem "In the Waiting Room" (a draft of which she sent to Lowell in 1967) places a child named Elizabeth inside a dentist's waiting room on a cold winter day. She is shyly reading the *National Geographic*, transfixed by pictures of "babies with pointed heads / wound round and round with string; / black, naked women with necks / wound round and round with wire / like the necks of light bulbs. / Their breasts were horrifying." This confrontation with horrifying difference precipitates the child's recognition of an even more horrifying sameness, as the room fills with a cry:

> Suddenly, from inside,
> came an oh! of pain
> —Aunt Consuelo's voice—
> not very loud or long . . .
> What took me by surprise
> was that it was me:
> my voice, in my mouth.
> Without thinking at all
> I was my foolish aunt,
> I—we—were falling, falling. (160)

This cry is the reverse of Jarrell's "telling the world," and the boy of Winander's calling to the owls. In Bishop's poem the cry that initiates the child into self-consciousness and teaches her about the essential nature of herself and the world is not the outward projection of her will to lyric power. Rather, it is a cry of indeterminate origin that dissolves the child out of particularity into a shared vulnerability to pain and its involuntary utterances. The complacency of Jarrell's vocational scene is countered fairly specifically near the poem's end, as the child wonders:

> Why should I be my aunt,
> or me, or anyone?
> What similarities—

> . . . .
> held us all together
> or made us all just one?
> How—I didn't know any
> word for it—how "unlikely" . . .   (161)

The shift from Jarrell's "agreeable" to Bishop's "unlikely" marks the difference between these two poets' visions of childhood and its spiritual preparations: Bishop's vocation is formed in insistently human surroundings and is attended by the vertigo surrounding a child learning for the first time what the world has known forever.[12]

The child's knowledge is dangerously acquired and uncertainly claimed, a riskiness that is the difference between the poems of *Geography III* and earlier ones. In her last book Bishop uses the license given her by the advent of confessionalism to explore autobiographical material explicitly, but she also reinvents the confessional model in specific ways. In her hands, autobiographical poetry becomes a means of seeing the self "more truly and more strange" (Stevens 65), not as more sympathetic, more interesting, or more glamorous. The risk that "In the Waiting Room" takes is the risk of engaging in real dialogue with the self as with another, in readiness for the odd answers that emerge. This kind of calling necessarily entails listening without knowing the answer, being able to understand the self as strange, and communication with it as potentially crushing, potentially illuminating. The cry "from inside" that the child both hears from her aunt's mouth and feels in her own signals Bishop's late reinvention of the Wordsworthian call, which she has restructured as initiated not by the poet's outward extension of voice but by her inward receptiveness to moments when internal and external voice are indistinguishable.

In three of *Geography III*'s most celebrated poems, "In the Waiting Room," "Poem," and "The Moose," the voices that inaugurate the poet into lyric insight are the voices that surrounded her in childhood. These poems form a distinct triad, in which Bishop explores the power of remembered speech, of her own past, to transform the poet's observations into visions. Her willingness to treat her past with some directness in these poems shows clearly the influence of her lifelong conversation about the matter of poetry with Robert Lowell. In a letter to Lowell written in 1957, after she received the manuscript for *Life Studies,* Bishop compliments him on his poems about his family: "they have that sure feeling, as if you'd been in a stretch . . . when everything and anything suddenly seemed material for poetry—or not material, seemed to *be* poetry, and all the past illuminated in long shafts here and there" (*One Art* 350). She goes on to admire his use of his family history: "I am green with envy of your kind of assurance. I feel that I could write as much detail about my Uncle Artie, say—but what would be the significance? Nothing at all" (351). However, by the late 1960s, as in "In the Waiting Room," Bishop had found a way to write more directly than ever before about her past, and to find in it poetry of greater significance than ever. She was goaded and educated by Lowell's example in writing about her past, though her emphasis is quite different from his. For example, his poem "The Scream," based on "In the Village," ends with the reflection that

> they are all gone,
> those aunts and uncles, a grandfather,
> a grandmother, my mother—
> even her scream—too frail
> for us to hear their voices long. (9)

In *Geography III,* by contrast, Bishop was increasingly concerned with the *durability* of past voices, and the resonances they permit the poet able to listen to them.

If "In the Waiting Room" describes the vertiginous blow the child receives when she comes into full contact with one of those voices, "Poem" elucidates the "gentle shock of mild surprise" the adult artist receives. The latter poem translates the child's experience of epiphany into aesthetic terms, defining the newly profound quality of the poet's consciousness after it has sustained lyric contact with the voices of her own past. "In the Waiting Room" ends with a stark account of dissolution and return:

> The waiting room was bright
> and too hot. It was sliding
> beneath a big black wave,
> another, and another.
>
> Then I was back in it.
> The War was on. Outside,

> in Worcester, Massachusetts,
> were night and slush and cold,
> and it was still the fifth
> of February, 1918. (161)

What happens in the stanza break to bring Elizabeth "back in it" remains nameless, and what insights it has left her with remain implicit; in its bare emphasis on tangible facts this ending confirms that the poem is about survival more than development. "Poem," on the other hand, takes up where "In the Waiting Room" leaves off, describing the enriched capabilities of a voice that has dissolved into and reassembled itself out of the voices of others. When the poem begins, the poet is inspecting the technique of a small painting, and something about losing herself in the details of this picture, that she calls "Useless and free . . . a minor family relic," allows her to see suddenly how much of her own life is in it:

> Heavens, I recognize the place, I know it!
> It's behind—I can almost remember the farmer's name.
> . . . .
> A sketch done in an hour, "in one breath,"
> once taken from a trunk and handed over.
> *Would you like this? I'll probably never*
> *have room to hang these things again.*
> *Your Uncle George, no, mine, my Uncle George,*
> *he'd be your great-uncle, left them all with Mother*
> *when he went back to England.*
> *You know, he was quite famous, an R.A. . . .* (176–77)

The final ellipsis gestures at what is commonly known about stories like this one: they have no natural end, they can go on indefinitely, as long as memory and interest hold out. In this way, the spoken, meandering language of family history has the same curious endurance of the sketch, painted "in one breath." They both have the ephemeral quality of the unplanned and unambitious, but they both also have the authority of roots in deeply ingrained and intertwined senses of place and history. The "one breath" that forms them is brief and impermanent, but also whole and intimate. The unbidden, surprising identification with family, so dislocating to the child, is pleasurable to the poet and allows her to articulate the specific aesthetic power of being in and out of oneself at the same time. Whereas the child feels her aunt's voice as an invasion, initiating her struggle to understand how she can be both her separate self and one of many women, white people, residents of Worcester, nieces, and patients, the poet experiences the strength of a voice permeated by the voices of others both like and unlike her: family, Canadians, other artists.

Having opened herself to the voice of an unnamed relative, the poet returns to her contemplation of the painting with an articulated sense of its importance:

> I never knew him. We both knew this place,
> apparently, this literal small backwater,
> looked at it long enough to memorize it,
> our years apart. How strange. And it's still loved,
> or its memory is (it must have changed a lot).
> Our visions coincided—"visions" is
> too serious a word—our looks, two looks:
> art "copying from life" and life itself,
> life and the memory of it so compressed
> they've turned into each other. Which is which?
> Life and the memory of it cramped,
> dim, on a piece of Bristol board,
> dim, but how live, how touching in detail
> —the little that we get for free,
> the little of our earthly trust. Not much.
> About the size of our abidance
> along with theirs: the munching cows,
> the iris, crisp and shivering, the water
> still standing from spring freshets,
> the yet-to-be-dismantled elms, the geese. (177)

She presents her epiphany cautiously: "life and the memory of it," the most abstract ideas in the poem, are "cramped," "dim" (twice), "little," "touching," and "not much." The sense of a precise balance between physical and metaphysical observation is strong; even the word "visions" could upset it, so the poet chooses "looks" instead. What this suggests, however, is not that the combination of life and memory in a small painting is insignificant, but that it can only be explored in its own terms, through the "little that we get for free." The poem moves through successive layers of what the poet has gotten "for free," first in the form of the painting itself, presented for her inspection, then the memory it evokes in her, and most importantly, the language appropriate to that memory. This colloquial language is itself "Useless and free" in its unself-consciousness and wide availability, and is one of the poem's figures of reciprocal poetic contact. It is the capacity to hear the implicit questions in "Poem" that allows the two "looks" to coincide, looks that are so thorough and interpenetrating that they do not need the term "visions."

Nevertheless, "Poem" prepares the ground for "The Moose," a poem in which the visionary is very much at issue when "life and the memory of it" intertwine.[13] The poem has the quality of fable, or fairy tale, tracing the progress of its narrator away from the familiar into a liminal space between the homely and the supernatural. Their meeting occurs as the narrator half sleeps and half hears "Grandparents' voices" in "an old conversation / —not concerning us, / but recognizable, somewhere / back in the bus" (171). Whereas the individual's submergence into the commonality of human cries results in "In the Waiting Room" in "a big black wave," in "The Moose" it becomes a source of poetic strength. In this poem we see the convergence of Bishop's late ideas about the human sources of vocation, and the invocations that mark it, with the talismanic power of animals to figure the successful call of the poet to the answering world. In other words, this poem returns us to the Wordsworthian scene she began addressing 30 years before in "Chemin de Fer." This time, however, she is able to summon the kind of radiant emblem of response the earlier poem could not imagine. This is to be expected, for as much as "Chemin de Fer" was a prospective poem, looking ahead with uncertainty, "The Moose" is in many ways a retrospective one, revisiting Bishop's familiar motifs and metaphors with a difference.

Chief among those motifs is that of travel; "The Moose" is, like "Arrival at Santos," a story of a journey "to the interior" (90). Unlike the narrator in that poem, however, the "lone traveller" in "The Moose" is leaving a scene rich with detail and friendly association. Her point of embarkation is not the unambitious port of Santos which "only attempt[s] . . . the unassertive colors of soap, or postage stamps" (90), but rather a brilliantly colored, fecund landscape capable of providing both the homeliest of comforts and sustenance and the most dramatic of views:

From narrow provinces
of fish and bread and tea,
home of the long tides
where the bay leaves the sea
twice a day and takes
the herrings long rides,
. . . .
where, silted red,
sometimes the sun sets
facing a red sea,
and others, veins the flats'
lavender, rich mud
in burning rivulets; (169)

"The Moose" is unique among Bishop's travel poems in its portrayal of the point of departure as both rich and fully absorbed by the traveler. There is in these first stanzas no feeling of the poet "rushing to see the sun the other way around" (93) or setting out to find "a different world / and a better life" (89). Instead, giving "kisses and embraces / to seven relatives," the traveler says "goodbye to the elms, / to the farm, to the dog" (170) with a calm that suggests she has made the most of her stay and emerged from it prepared and unhurried. As the trip starts, the route the bus takes unfolds in logical sequence, and is marked by place names that correspond with intuitive clarity to what they name:

One stop at Bass River.
Then the Economies—
Lower, Middle, Upper;
Five Islands, Five Houses,
where a woman shakes a tablecloth
out after supper. (170)

The clearness of this marking is in stark contrast to that in "The Map." In "The Map" it is the dissonance between the artistry of mapmaking and maps' supposedly transparently representative function that interests the poet; "are they assigned," she wonders, "or can the countries pick their colors?" (3) In the world of "The Moose," on the other hand, such questions are, apparently, moot; the landscape is named securely, by unmistakable social constructions, in which there is no danger of "names of seashore towns run[ning] out to sea, / . . . —the printer . . . experiencing the same excitement / as when emotion too far exceeds its cause" (3). The security of the names is security for the poet as well; no longer is she Crusoe, compelled to dream

> of islands, islands spawning islands,
> like frog's eggs turning into polliwogs
> of islands, knowing that I had to live
> on each and every one, eventually,
> for ages, registering their flora,
> their fauna, their geography. (165)

This homely world is obscured, however, by the enveloping mist that "comes closing in" (170). As the mist transforms the homely world of cabbages and hens, it suggests the uncanniness the poet is about to perceive in the homely atmosphere of the voices that surround her. The voices become uncanny, un-homely, as they offer the poet the dangerous temptation to be persuaded by the familiarity of her surroundings to give in to them, to be submerged as she was in "In the Waiting Room," only this time by her own choice. As in that poem, the specific submergence at issue involves voices of unseen speakers, in this case those of distant grandparents. The very amiability of the people in the bus asks the poet's complicity in becoming inhabited by the voices all around her, as

> A dreamy divagation
> begins in the night,
> a gentle, auditory,
> slow hallucination. . . .
>
> In the creakings and noises,
> an old conversation
> —not concerning us,
> but recognizable, somewhere,
> back in the bus. . . . (171)

The conversation happening "back in the bus" concerns an untroubled assimilation of experience:

deaths, deaths and sicknesses;
the year he remarried;
the year (something) happened

into a "peculiar affirmative":

A sharp, indrawn breath,
half groan, half acceptance,
that means "Life's like that.
We know it (also death)." (172)

The "peculiar affirmative" that combines the exhalation of speech with the inhalation of breath, and connotes simultaneously knowledge of death and life, figures the ominous and potentially powerful nature of the submission the poet is being asked to accept; if she joins that ongoing "conversation," will she be subsumed, muted, dead? At this point "The Moose" suggests a hidden affinity with another poem about a merging that is half-chosen and half-coerced, Emily Dickinson's "Because I could not stop for death." The initial stanzas of that poem describe a similar journey in similar company:

Because I could not stop for Death—
He kindly stopped for me—
The carriage held but just Ourselves—
And Immortality.

We slowly drove—He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility—

We passed the School, where Children strove
At Recess—in the Ring—
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain—
We passed the Setting Sun— (350)

Dickinson's poem illuminates the figurative stakes of Bishop's slow trip and accommodating companions; to put away "labor and leisure," to pass beyond earthly occupations, is to risk becoming the permanent consort of Death and Immortality.[14] The "death" that threatens Bishop as she faces the possibility of choosing to be filled with the voices of a half-real, half-mythological childhood is that they will overwhelm her, cancel out the voice so carefully cultivated in poems of autonomy and observation. As we have seen, that danger is vividly present to her as the obliteration the child feels upon hearing the mother's scream. The invitation Bishop receives to take this chance is as seductive in its own way as Dickinson's; having listened to the conversation unfolding behind her, Bishop reflects that they are "talking the way they talked / in the old featherbed, / peacefully, on and on," a sound so familiar that "now, it's all right now / even to fall asleep / just as on all those nights" (172).

But the poet does not fall asleep; instead she confronts the waking vision of the moose, who is at once holy and homely, otherworldly and reassuring:

> Towering, antlerless,
> high as a church,
> homely as a house
> (or, safe as houses). (173)

This vision appears after the poet is jolted back into communion with the world outside of the bus "—Suddenly" (172), the dash noting the present and inarticulated connection between her immersion in the grandparents' conversation and the appearance of the moose, who is both the observed and the observer, "look[ing] the bus over" (173) as the passengers exclaim over her, and whose presence has the quality of an omen. That quality is wholly benign; the poet feels it, and so do her companions, united for the time being by "this sweet / sensation of joy" (173).[15] This sensation is remarkable for its ease, and for its purity; it expresses a "profundity of experience," to use Moore's terms, that happens elsewhere in Bishop's poetry at the edges of consciousness, if it happens at all.[16]

In "In the Waiting Room," the child's introduction to self-consciousness is a form of listening as much as speaking; "The Moose" extends the logic of that moment by figuring a scene of lyric invocation in which it is the poet's ability to lose herself in a particular kind of part-remembered, part-overheard, part-imagined speech that summons the majestic female moose. That "sweet sensation of joy" marks this late, impressive, and hard-won achievement of a figure of invocation that revisits and transforms its roots in romanticism by internalizing the particular voices made available to the poet as subject matter by confessionalism. From across a poetic career beginning in "Chemin de Fer" comes a reimagining of the vocative in "The Moose" that figures vocation as a reciprocity between past and present, poet and subject. It is in that imaginative passage that this minor female Wordsworth has given us one modern definition of what it means to be major.

Notes

1. All quotations of Bishop's poetry are from *The Complete Poems 1927–1979.*

2. For example, apart from several letters to Marianne Moore, Bishop wrote nothing about Wallace Stevens, whose *Harmonium* she "knew by heart" at Vassar (qtd. in Millier 51) and to whose "Auroras of Autumn" "The End of March" responds (see McClatchy 71 and Fiet-Diehl 108).

3. In this essay I use the terms *calling* and *vocation* in their narrowest sense, to mean fitness for a particular profession, in this case, poetry. I have not investigated their usages in early American literature as commonplaces of Protestant, middle-class morality; for an eloquent discussion related to this latter sense, see Hammer.

4. See also Speigelman, Doreski 39, and Lombardi 82. Rzepka makes a point similar to mine about the uses of Wordsworth in Bishop criticism. Our arguments are complementary: Rzepka emphasizes the way these readings respond to "a sentimentalized Victorian parody" of Wordsworth, whereas I show that they discount Bishop's own ambition in claiming that it is essentially different from Wordsworth's.

5. Zimmerman reads this poem (alongside Bishop's "In the Village" and "In the Waiting Room") in a similar fashion to make intriguing connections to D.W. Winnicott's theories of infant self-fashioning.

6. All quotations of Wordsworth's poetry are from *The Prelude* (1805 text). The parenthetical references give book and line numbers.

7. I want to be clear that I am not discounting Bishop's intelligence about the power dynamics of race and class. "Faustina," for example, is, as Rich points out, a singularly unsentimental examination of "the 'conundrum' of white power, the history of what whites have done to Black people, and the vulnerability of this particular dying old woman" (132). Other critics have amply documented Bishop's ongoing awareness of racial and economic injustices in both the United States and Brazil, including most recently Brogan in her incisive analysis of the political implications of the ballad form in "The Burglar of

Babylon." Pertinent too is Longenbach's discussion of Bishop's political engagements. His essay is exemplary of the work done in the last 10 years to contradict a popular critical image of Bishop as an insular, detached, purely aestheticized poet. While this work is both valuable and accurate, my point here is to claim that as perceptive as Bishop's poems are about racial and economic "otherness," they nevertheless do not lead to the particular kind of new (for Bishop) imaginative figures that her later explorations do.

8. Two readings that contradict mine may be found in Dickie and Erkkila. Dickie suggests that the relationship between Manuelzhino and his employer is more equal than it seems, as "he provides his mistress with a rich emotional life; she whose hat is 'unpainted' is no match for this man with the superfluously painted brim on his hat" (54). Erkkila makes a similar argument in a Bahktinian mode, claiming that

> while the master speaks the poem her voice is ironized not only by the poem's descriptions of hunger, poverty, sickness, and death but also by the endlessly inventive folk energies of Manuelzhino, who doesn't, or "won't," or "can't" submit to the master's demands for order, boundaries, and control. (299–301)

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While I agree that the poem has a grudging affection for Manuelzhino's chaotic energy, I see no evidence that this presents a genuine challenge to the reader's implied identification with the speaker's frustration with what she sees as laziness and stupidity.

9. In judging Bishop's tone in this way I am aligning myself with Bromwich's contention that Bishop "in the sense of a warm sociability . . . certainly was not charming, least of all when she meant to be, as in her poems about the poor" (77–78), a category into which he also places "Filling Station."

10. Bishop herself anticipates reactions such as mine, assuring Robert Lowell that "you don't have to like the 'Riverman' poem. Lota hates it and I don't approve of it myself . . ." (*One Art* 382). For a more sympathetic reading of the poem, see Goldensohn, who finds in it "a uniquely expressive voice" (221).

11. Bishop's privacy has been in various ways at the center of Bishop studies since their beginning in Marianne Moore's short essay "Archaically New," an introduction to Bishop's work published in *Trial Balances*. Moore praises Bishop for what she holds back, noting that "one would rather disguise than travesty emotion" (*Prose* 328). Rich challenges earlier critics' reading of that reticence, finding in it the suppressed feelings of a lesbian "outsider," "an 'invert' in the old jargon . . . try[ing] to live and love in two worlds" (129). On the evidence of Bishop's letters, however, it seems likelier that the secret life she protected

most tirelessly and wrenchingly was her life as a drinker, not as a lesbian. While her letters are, first to last, full of accounts of her relationships with women and written in terms that betray no anxiety on the subject, her letters about drinking are full of denial, remorse, rage, and desperation. Moreover, it was those letters that were put on restricted access in the Vassar archives after her death. For instance, a 1954 letter to Anny Baumann is poignant in its falseness:

> I realized, when I was honest, that I was really losing the power to concentrate for any good long stretches of time—But thank goodness I have never "craved" alcohol the way some people seem to, from what I read, at least— (Special Collections, Folder 23.2)

I would speculate too that this lifelong habit of edited self-presentation is as much responsible as a natural predilection for reticence for the kind of harshness about emotion one finds in her unpublished review of Emily Dickinson's letters:

> There is a constant insistence on the strength of her affections, an almost childish daringness and repetitiveness about them, that must sometimes have been very hard to take. Is it a tribute to the friends themselves, that they could take it and frequently appreciate her as a poet as well? Or is it occasionally only a tribute to the bad taste and extreme sentimentality of the times?
> (Special Collections, Folder 34.10)

Surely she has herself in mind when she continues, "if we are sometimes embarrassed by Emily Dickinson's letters we are always spared the contemporary letter-writer's frequent cynicism and endless 'humor.'"

12. In writing about the uses of childhood in Bishop, Lowell, Jarrell, and Berryman, Thomas Travisano comments:

> For each of these four poets, the motif of expulsion from paradise reappears in many forms throughout their poetry, marking moments of profound loss that are also points of conscious entry into selfhood, into the pleasures and dangers of the social and material world, and the parallel pleasures and dangers of artistic creation. (77)

While I clearly agree with the substance of Travisano's point, it seems to me important to note that Bishop nowhere pictures childhood as paradisiacal; the child seems instead to tumble into experience out of neutrality. This distinctive feature makes her later figures of successful poetic invocation the more radical, becoming the inventions of knowledge rather than the recovery of innocence.

13. I have been guided in my reading of this poem by Costello's lucid discussion of it, in which she writes:

> In "The Moose" . . . Bishop's excursive vision ceases to be a form of restraint against imagination (against the imposition of desires upon the experiential world) and instead becomes a satisfying integration of imagination with experience. The imagination is allowed to do more than merely "ponder" "blurr'dly and inconclusively." She allows, instead, moments of completeness through figurative power which are not merely a return to self-reflection. (160)

14. Costello reports that in her notes for the poem Bishop recorded the aphorism: "our nature consists in motion; complete rest is death" (167).

15. A different version of such "profundity" may be seen in "The End of March," where the poet's approach to her crypto-dream house enables her brush with the "lion sun." See White.

16. That such a direct encounter with her own capacity to invoke the world's response requires not only power but courage as well is suggested by an early draft of the poem in which there appears before the bus "a night mare moose" (Special Collections, Folder 59.4), a figure too threatening to be safe and homely as well as majestic.

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Confession and Autobiography in James Merrill's Early Poetry

Timothy Materer

> You know, this guy's got a secret, and he's gonna keep it.
> —Arthur Miller to Dylan Thomas about James Merrill
> (Merrill, *A Different Person* 255)

The publication of James Merrill's *Collected Poems* (2001) revealed a poet perfecting his craft for some 50 years in poems that became increasingly personal and emotionally powerful. The volume's reviewers have described Merrill as a formalist master: a "miraculous mandarin" (Simic 6), a "Mozartian" love poet (Vendler, "Ardor" 101), a "magician" (Fraser 3), and so richly gifted that he seemed "extraterrestrial" (Allison Lurie qtd. in Mendelsohn 16). But the reviewers were also struck by how autobiographical his poetry is when seen as a whole. Even Adam Kirsch, who complains of Merrill's ironic detachment and aestheticism, concludes that in his autobiographical poems he was one of "the finest American poets of the last half-century" (44).

Charles Simic believes that Merrill's escape from the "aesthete's aloofness" by the time he published *Water Street* (1962) was in part inspired by confessional poetry, especially Lowell's *Life Studies,* with its "autobiographical bent and shameless self-concentration." Simic writes that Lowell deeply influenced Merrill's autobiographical preoccupations and stylistic directness, but he adds that Merrill did not share Lowell's "need to blurt out dark secrets" (6).[1] The inevitable reservation of critics, when they relate Merrill to the confessionals, is that he is never *genuinely* confessional. For example, when David Kalstone compares Merrill's poetry to "so-called 'confessional' poetry," he argues that Merrill, unlike Lowell, "is not engaged in capturing the raw momentary feel of experience in the present tense." Yet Kalstone also shows how Merrill's poems "come close to day-to-day living by discovering the fantasies behind our civilized arrangements" (79). This perceptive observation undermines the distinction Kalstone develops (which depends merely on the adjective "raw") between Lowell and Merrill as autobiographical poets. Helen Vendler distinguishes Merrill from the confessionals because his poems "show none of that urgency to reveal the untellable or unspeakable that we associate with the poetry we call 'confessional.'" However, Vendler is referring here to the poems of Merrill's *Braving the Elements* (1972). About the early poems, she remarks that "Secrecy and obliquity were Merrill's worst obstacles" ("James Merrill" 206).

Merrill's early poetry does indeed reveal the "urgency to reveal the untellable," and the impulse continues into his mature work. The urgency came from the desire to write freely of his life as a homosexual, which he resisted for many years. We can appreciate this confessional element in his work by exploring the autobiographical sources of Merrill's poetry.[2] The poem Mendelsohn chooses to illustrate the influence of the confessionals, especially Lowell, on Merrill's style is one of the sonnets from "The Broken Home" (*Nights and Days*, 1966). (Although confessionals are usually associated with free verse, Merrill follows an older convention in unlocking his heart through the sonnet.) In the middle sonnet of "The Broken Home," Merrill as the "child I was" enters his mother's bedroom with his "satyr-thighed" Irish setter, seeing her "Under a sheet, clad in taboos . . . hair undone, outspread." The child flees the "troubling and never to be forgotten encounter with his medusa-like mother" (Mendelsohn 16): "Her eyes flew open, startled strange and cold" (*CP* 198).[3] In this sequence of seven sonnets, the fourth one on his frightening encounter with his mother is the key to the rest, and I will return to it.[4]

The resemblance to Lowell in the other poems of "The Broken Home" is even more striking. Merrill's sequence presents an Oedipal drama much like the one in *Life Studies*. Both Lowell's and Merrill's personae are children who are overwhelmed by the intense emotions ("How intensely people used to feel!" [*CP* 199]) of their parents' failed marriages. (Merrill's parents divorced when he was 12; a newspaper described him as a "pawn" [*DP* 186][5] in the divorce case.) Both Lowell and Merrill write of escaping from this intensity into the imaginary world of their toy soldiers. In a draft of the poem, Merrill identifies himself with a toy soldier, suggesting that, like the soldier, he can be displaced as easily as a toy or pawn.[6] His style becomes as plain as Lowell's in lines such as the opening of the second sonnet: "My father, who had flown in World War I / Might have continued to invest his life . . ." (*CP* 197). As in Lowell's family portrait, Merrill's reveals a father with a physically adventurous period behind him (the senior Lowell as a sailor, Charles Merrill as a flyer) who becomes preoccupied by financial concerns ("piker speculations" for Lowell [72] and vastly successful ones for Merrill). Both children have frustrated mothers whose demands on their sons are consequently excessive. One sees Merrill employing Lowell's style of mordant irony in Merrill's line about his father shortly before his death: "He was 'in his prime' / At three score ten" (*CP* 197) where he appears as pathetic as Lowell's father speaking "his last words to Mother . . . / 'I feel awful'" (74).

Comparing Merrill to Lowell, Simic considers Merrill's autobiographical style "more reticent, more sneaky, and in [its] own way more terrifying" (6). Although Merrill is indeed the more reticent poet, they are equally insightful as they discover and dramatize a pattern of events within their lives that gives them a sense of aesthetic fulfillment and moral understanding. One pattern they uncover is that the failings of their parents are repeated in their own lives. We see this repeated pattern in the opening line of Lowell's "Man and Wife": "Tamed by *Miltown*, we lie on Mother's bed" (87). In "The Broken Home," Merrill's reflection on the emotional patterns he finds in his parents' lives shows him that he has ironically kept the commandment to "honor and obey" them—"at least, inversely" (*CP* 199)—through his own failures to love. As in Lowell, Plath, John Berryman, and Anne Sexton, Merrill's insights were developed over years of psychoanalysis. As Vendler has said, the confessional poem might better be called the "Freudian poem," which she believes became "an inescapable evolutionary form once many poets began, in analysts' offices, a sedulous examination of the inner life and the family romance" (*Given and Made* 40).

Merrill's formal examination of his "family romance" began at the age of 21, when his mother insisted that he consult a psychiatrist (*DP* 89–90). Merrill's response to the crisis that preceded the psychoanalysis tells us much about his early development as a poet and the background of "The Broken Home." The first poem in *Collected Poems,* "The Black Swan," which both Vendler and Simic cite to illustrate Merrill's virtuosity while still a 19-year-old college student, deals with this crisis; but it does so in a highly coded way. Vendler suggests that the black swan, which draws a "private chaos warbling in its wake" (*CP* 3), expresses Merrill's sense of himself as an outsider among the white swans ("Ardor" 100). The poem describes a blond boy with "white ideas" of swans (*ideas* in Wallace Stevens's sense of given perceptions of reality) who is confronted with a black swan that challenges those ideas. As a symbol, the swan is inexhaustible; the young poet describes it as a "question-mark," a "tall emblem," and a "thing in itself" (*CP* 3) with a beauty that can give us at least the illusion that it can transform suffering.

Merrill's swan is highly allusive as well as symbolic. In French poetry the swan motif lends itself to wordplay, since the French word for swan (*cygne*) sounds like the word for sign *(signe)*. Merrill alludes to several French poems in which the swan is a sign indicating a world of art, including Stéphane Mallarmé's sonnet *"Le Vierge, le vivace, et le bel aujourd'hui,"* with its swan trapped on a frozen lake, and Charles Baudelaire's "Le Cygne," about a swan that escapes its cage to the bewildering Paris streets. A third allusion to a French work supports Vendler's suggestion that Merrill identifies himself with the black swan. In a letter to his teacher at Amherst College, Kimon Friar, Merrill translates a vignette from Paul Valéry's *Mélange* about a child—described as being as white as the swans—who wanders from his distracted nurse and almost drowns among the swans (Letter 24 July 1946). Since the near drowning is described as rather pleasant, the child's rescue and return to his grandfather is perhaps unfortunate. The drowning theme also appears in another of Merrill's college-age poems, "The Drowning Poet."

Allusive and symbolic in the poetic manner of the 1950s, "The Black Swan" presents a "thing in itself," a verbal icon with an objective existence separate from the writer and a complex meaning of its own. It offers what T. S. Eliot called an "objective correlative." Yet the swan image is also deeply personal, and to use Merrill's own variant on Eliot's term, it is really a "subjective correlative" (*Changing Light* 219) for an emotion that is in excess of its object. The emotion expressed in the concluding line seems unmotivated when the boy cries out "In anguish: I love the black swan" (*CP* 3). The poem's description of a child observing a swan gives us no explanation for the anguish. In Merrill's revision of the poem for *From the First Nine* (1982), the boy is more appropriately "Now in bliss, now in doubt" rather than in anguish (4).

A motivation for the boy's anguish is that "The Black Swan" is a love poem for his teacher Kimon Friar, whom Merrill referred to lovingly as the "black swan" because his complexion turned so dark in the summer.[7] Friar is now known as the translator into English of modern Greek poets such as George Seferis and Constantine Cavafy, and especially for his translation of *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* by Nikos Kazantzakis. In 1945 he was director of the YMHA Poetry Center in New York and teaching at Amherst College. Merrill had recently returned from the army to Amherst and soon met Friar, who was 15 years older and living the literary life that Merrill wished for himself. Friar accepted Merrill as his informal poetry student, and one of the assignments he gave his new student was to write a poem about a swan and a lake in a certain meter and stanza. Merrill turned the exercise into a love poem for the man he describes in his memoir, *A Different Person,* as his "first love" (19).

The outcome of the affair is described in Merrill's memoir. In December 1945, Merrill's mother intercepted a letter from Merrill to Friar revealing the intimacy of the relationship. According to Merrill's mother, Merrill's father was considering putting out a contract on Friar with Murder Incorporated (*DP* 151). Her unlikely claim seemed meant to justify her own strong actions in separating her son from Friar. During a meeting she arranged with a lawyer in New York, the two men were forbidden to meet or even speak with one other, but they both were allowed to return to Amherst to finish out the academic year. After escaping this potential scandal at Amherst, Friar left for Greece in June 1946 while Merrill (still only 20 and without the independent income he would enjoy at 21) spent a penitential summer under the watchful eyes of his mother and grandmother. Merrill's parents also insisted that he begin treatments with a New York psychiatrist who thought homosexuality could be "cured" (*DP* 89). This psychiatrist told a skeptical Merrill that Friar was a substitute father who compensated in Merrill's mind for the father who had betrayed both mother and child through the divorce (Letter 28 Sept. 1946).

Like "The Black Swan," many of Merrill's early poems are about this crisis. His earliest volume, *The Black Swan* (1946), was conceived by Friar himself as a collection of poems concerning their love affair. Friar suggested publishing the volume when he asked Merrill in August 1946 to send him a poem he had misplaced. He suggested printing a volume that would collect these love poems in one place in a permanent form. In addition to "The Black Swan," the poems that seem most likely to concern this affair include "The Formal Lovers," "Suspense of Love," "Medusa" (about his mother's opposition to the affair), and "Embarkation Sonnets" (concerning Friar's departure for Greece). *The Black Swan* is dedicated to Friar, with an epigram in Greek drawn from Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*, which Merrill translated in the copy he inscribed for Friar: "Of all my friends I have found you most a friend."[8] The dedicatory poem of the volume, which begins "Keats on board ship for what we shall call Rome" (*CP* 677), refers to Friar (whose students flattered him by comparing him to Keats) departing for Athens. The initial letters of the poem's 10 lines spell out KIMON FRIAR.

"The Black Swan" is thus a declaration, in "anguish," that Merrill loves the black swan in spite of the "white ideas" of the conventional world (*CP* 3). Friar was challenging Merrill to acknowledge his homosexuality publicly, but soon realized that Merrill was not yet independent enough to defy his family. Merrill was even fearful that his mother would discover his correspondence with Friar. Friar reflects on this situation in a poetic reply to "The Black Swan" that he published in *Poetry* in 1957. "In Childhood's Chair" describes a confrontation with Hellen Merrill, who sits in "childhood's chair," regarding the children with a Medusan gaze. Merrill appears as the "blond child running . . . / To a white seashore and a sunlit sea," and Kimon as a "black" child who is the figure of the poet in the form of Perseus. (Merrill referred to Friar as "Perseus" in the journal he kept at Amherst.) He holds a "flaming sword," mastering the Medusa and making "monstrous love" with the blond child. The poem seems to reflect a meeting Friar and Merrill had with Mrs. Merrill in her New York apartment when Merrill defiantly insisted that he would always love Kimon. Yet his defiance did not extend to renouncing his family's authority.

Merrill's early poetry resembles the fiction of Marcel Proust, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick describes it in her *Epistemology of the Closet*. She argues that *À la recherche* is both a justification of Proust's homosexuality and a concealment of it addressed to Proust's mother: "Is it not the mother to whom both the coming-out testament and its continued refusal to come out are addressed?" (248). Merrill addresses several of his earliest poems to his mother in this paradoxical spirit of explaining what he is also concealing. Like Friar's "In Childhood's Chair," Merrill's poem "Medusa" of *First Poems* casts her as a woman who turns men to stone. But we must not think of Medusa as a horrible visage of writhing snakes. Instead, she has the kind of beauty described in a sonnetlike sequence (15 lines, pentameters alternating with trimeter) of five poems that Merrill sent to Kimon entitled "Gestures of Death." He published a revised four-poem sequence as "Forms of Death" in an unpaged Amherst College pamphlet (*Ten Student Poems*), where his mother would be unlikely to see it; and he never reprinted it. The first poem in the sequence is about a drowned swimmer lying on the sands "like a dried medusa." The fourth poem describes "the white epic of your face," an allusion to his mother's name, Hellen; and of course that face launched one of the great traumas of his life. It begins:

> Only the satin lives, and you my mother
> Are featureless, your image overexposed:
> A photograph at the brilliant end of time.
> Shadows are feathered on your face my mother[.]
> No gentle plumage is roused
> To do your meekness homage
> Or dim the white countenance of your crime.

In "Gestures of Death" he added a note to Kimon that these lines refer to "an incredible picture . . . of Mama, so badly developed that her face is dead white, expressionless, slitted eyes and only a suggestion of a mouth. One of the great photographs." The "crime" of course was coming between Merrill and the black swan. Perhaps the photograph is one of her (overexposed) wedding photographs. Merrill seems to be speaking of a similar wedding photograph in his late poem "Oranges":

> A fragrant crown upon her snow-white veil.
> The photograph obsessed him. Didn't she know
> What grievous crops such blossomings entail? (*CP* 856)

Kimon Friar's theory of poetry suggests how the frightful Medusa can also be beautiful, like the photograph. He published an essay entitled "Medusa-Mask" in *Poetry* (1940) that Merrill reprinted in the Amherst College publication *The Medusa*. (Merrill started the magazine with another Amherst student; its title is a tribute to Friar's influence.) Friar writes that we should remember that the Medusa was once beautiful and may still be to the "inner vision" (324).[9] For Friar, the Medusa is a dangerous muselike figure, like Keats's *la belle dame* or Walter Pater's Mona Lisa or Eliot's Lady of Situations. She represents for him the world's beauty, design, and form, which is more likely to stun the poet into silence rather than poetry. Hence Merrill's title "Forms of Death" refers to "form" as a potentially deadly force because of Medusa's overwhelming strength. In another *Black Swan* poem, the lovers of "The Formal Lovers" learn they must "subject their favors / To a fevered dominance of form" (*CP* 686).

"In Childhood's Chair," Perseus is Friar's type of the poet because he conquered the Medusa through indirection, which is the poet's method. Citing Emily Dickinson, Friar advised his students to tell all the truth, but tell it slant. One must approach the Medusa as she is reflected in the shield of art and, like Hamlet, find direction through indirections. Merrill hoped that he too could master the Medusa by breaking free from his family and living the life of a poet. But the "meekness" referred to in "Forms of Death" saps his strength. In the final poem of "Forms of Death," a woman stitches "with gold each agony of my skin" until her victim shines in "a gold nonchalance of doom." This poem is based on a dream Merrill had about his mother that he recorded in his journal for February 1947 and anticipates a later poem about his mother as a threatening "needle woman" ("Mornings in a New House," *CP* 261). In the dream, the stitching is painful; yet the dreamer desires it. The dream seems to reflect Merrill's failure to break with his mother as Friar urged. In "The Flint Eye" of *First Poems* (1951), the female persona's aggression is also lethal. Fruit from her lap "Lay shriveling flat upon a scorched perspective," and her "gaze imperial" is able to "Fix poets, gross eccentrics" (*CP* 6).

Both *The Black Swan* and *First Poems* tell the truth about Merrill's agonized struggle with his sexuality, but they tell it slant. In 1982, Merrill said that in his early poetry, "Because I didn't know what I felt, what was obscurely said had a kind of resonance that charmed me." His uncertainty also motivated him "to create a surface of such impenetrability and, at the same time, such beauty that it wouldn't yield up a meaning easily, if at all" (*Recitative* 8). From Kimon Friar he had learned that indirect means and a personal mythology were essential to the modern poet; both poets draw on the Perseus-Medusa myth in their poetry when darkly alluding to their love affair. Merrill's "The Medusa" appeared in *The Medusa* (Fall 1946) and then in *The Black Swan*. He once characterized this poem, as if to forestall the interpretation given here, as a "poem without content, really" (*Recitative* 42). On the contrary, the poem resembles Sylvia Plath's "The Colossus" as an early, crucial development of an autobiographical myth. Both Merrill and Plath imagine their feared parents as mythological, godlike entities that must be confronted even if they cannot be conquered. (Plath also explored her feelings about her mother in a poem entitled "Medusa.")

Plath's exploration of the "colossus" of her father's memory leaves her persona on a barren shore married to a shadow, and Merrill's in "The Medusa" is left defiant but powerless. As in "Forms of Death," the intricate rhyme scheme and varying line lengths of the poem's 15-line stanzas play variations on the sonnet form. Of the five sections, two middle ones do not focus as directly on the Medusa as the others do and allow Merrill's persona to seem merely self-pitying. In the fourth section, the oppressed youths of the poem have turned to each other and "declared / Our lives were failing like a bleeding bird" (*CP* 8). The suffering seems too generalized because it affects a group of young men rather than a defined protagonist. When Merrill revised the poem in 1982, he strengthened the ending by focusing on a single poet; but the early version better reflects his sense that those with poetic sensibility (or homosexual desires), such as Friar and himself, are victimized by the world's "white ideas."

When Merrill focuses on the Medusa herself rather than on the poet as victim, he is able to express a more complex feeling of horror and fascination with the "snake-haired head with overturned eyeballs" (*CP* 7). Like Plath's colossus, Merrill's Medusa also "had fallen to disrepair," but the blind and moss-covered Medusa can still transfix with a "stone-eyed spell." The only hope of opposing her blank stare is suggested by the "parables / Of wingéd-heeled assassins, mirror-armed" (*CP* 7), which alludes to Friar's Perseus image. The young men of "The Medusa" imagine a Perseus who heroically confronts the "single mask of stone" while viewing the deadly vision in the mirror of art. Reflecting Merrill's mood during his separation from Friar, the poem's final lines show how futile the dream is as the youthful challengers confront the

> dry serpent horror
> Of days reflected in a doubtful mirror
> With all their guileful melody, until
> We raise our quivering swords and think to kill. (*CP* 8)

These hapless youths only "think" to kill because their "quivering" phallic swords are too weak. Yet they have made their defiant gesture. From a Freudian perspective, there is consolation simply in raising the sword. Merrill might almost have been looking at Freud's comment in "Medusa's Head" when writing the poem: "To display the penis (or any of its surrogates) is to say: 'I am not afraid of you. I defy you'" (265). However, like the young men of "The Medusa," Merrill was still only *thinking* of a break from his mother. One defiant gesture he did make was to strike the middle name "Ingram" from the proofs of *The Black Swan* because it was his mother's maiden name. But Merrill felt that patience was necessary. In "The Formal Lovers" *(The Black Swan)*, the "Lovers damned for old extremes," must learn to build from their failures "a braver order" (*CP* 687). The lovers "Learn loss as artists always will" and console themselves that "Dark is the perfect thing we have" (*CP* 689).

When Arthur Miller told Dylan Thomas, while attending Merrill's play *The Bait* in 1953, "You know, this guy's got a secret, and he's gonna keep it," he was right about the play even though he left it early. In *The Bait,* a man allows his faithless wife and friend to drag him behind a boat as bait until he surfaces in a symbolic rebirth. In *A Different Person,* Merrill acknowledges the truth of Miller's remark and also admits: "I never doubted that almost any poem I wrote owed some of its difficulty to the need to conceal my feelings, and their objects. Genderless as a figleaf, the pronoun 'you' served to protect the latter, but one couldn't be too careful" (141). By "objects" he means the male lovers who are in fact the frequent subjects of his poems. At times he also needed to conceal himself not only from the reader but also from his lover. In the italics that mark his retrospective reflections in *A Different Person,* Merrill confesses that *"I shied away from being saddled with a lover capable of seeing into my heart, for would he not then despise the confusion he saw there?"* (53).

Merrill's *First Poems* (1951) continue to express his struggle with his sexuality and his desire to become a different person through images that conceal the nature of the struggle. To the poems of *The Black Swan*, *First Poems* adds emblem poems such as "The Parrot," "The Pelican," and "The Peacock." As Stephen Yenser observes, the "*rara avis* that these poems try again and again to name is the Poet" (38). To use Vendler's terms, the "obliquity" merely reveals the young poet's sense of himself as a "misfit" ("Ardor" 101). These poems communicate what Simic describes as the "aesthete's aloofness . . . that impression of wanting to dazzle the reader with his quick wit and nothing terribly urgent at sake" (6). Poems such as "Hourglass" (which begins "Alone, one can but toy with imagery" [*CP* 16]), "The Broken Bowl" ("splinters rainbowing ruin . . . / Cut structure[s] in the air" [*CP* 4]), and "Willow" (a poem about its own imagery of willows) give the sense that what Merrill truly loves, as Simic puts it, "is the self-enclosed, beautiful world his imagination has constructed" (6). The pre-Raphaelite maiden in "Transfigured Bird" who keeps "Fabergé's royal Easter eggs . . . / To look at in her moods" (*CP* 34) supports what Yenser describes as "the commonplace observation that [Merrill] began as a Fabergé among the post-Modern American poets" (39). Although some readers did sense the urgency behind the formality, *First Poems* and the following volume, *The Country of a Thousand Years of Peace* (1959), confirmed the general sense of Merrill's aestheticism and obscurity.[10]

Emotions are tightly masked in *The Country of a Thousand Years of Peace* (1959). The narrative below the surface of these poems is the failure of a love affair with the man who replaced Kimon Friar in Merrill's life. In *A Different Person*, Merrill explains that a poem like "Hôtel de l'Univers et Portugal," where the lovers experience "a strange city's clear grave acids" (*CP* 68), reflects his dwindling love affair with Claude Fredericks, who had been a member of a group that gathered around Kimon Friar (*DP* 7–8). His affair with Claude became the focus of the psychoanalysis he began in Rome in 1952.[11] Indeed, for a time both Fredericks and Merrill had the same psychoanalyst, Dr. Thomas Detre. In "Walking All Night" the poem's self-criticism is derived from an insight that came from his psychoanalysis: "Loving my neighbor as I love myself, / No more, no less, for I do not love myself" (*CP* 107). What was the source of this feeling? His psychoanalysis suggested that it reflected his difficulty accepting his sexuality. Analyzing the end of Merrill's affair with Fredericks, Dr. Detre suggested that Merrill was "punishing" his lovers. Merrill thought that "sound[ed] right," but what could be the motivation? Detre answered, "Put it simply: to punish both yourself and him for being homosexual" (*DP* 228–29). Although Merrill allows Detre to have the "last word," he neither endorses nor dismisses Detre's observation. But he did explore its implications in poems such as "Saint" and "The Charioteer of Delphi."

The subject of "Saint" is St. Sebastian, a homosexual icon. In a study of Eliot's "The Love Song of St. Sebastian," Richard Kaye surveys the rich tradition of homoerotic poems about the saint and concludes: "For writers of aestheticist leanings who frequently sought a coded means of denoting homosexual desire, Sebastian had become the symbol of choice" (109). In "Saint" a martyr replaces the heroic Perseus as Merrill's type of the poet in one of his most agonized and oblique meditations on love. Fastened to a "fruit-bearing" tree, St. Sebastian declares his tenderness for the archers and his desire for the arrows that pierce him: "*He kisses me who kills, who kills me kisses!*" (*CP* 73). The saint's willing sacrifice suggests Merrill's criticism of himself, both in *A Different Person* and in later poems such as "Matinees." He seemed perversely to crave loss and betrayal in love because he desired the kind of elaborate drama, as in the opera, that flows from thwarted loves. He wrote of himself as he was in the early 50s that, if

> the garb of the aesthete seemed cut out for me, it was because poetry and grand opera were the only key I possessed to the heart's innermost chamber and the psychic nudity permitted there. Alas, the heart's innermost chamber, to judge by the reactions of those I paid suit to, was all too often a suffocating hole. (46–47)

The speaker of "Saint" asserts that St. Sebastian, unlike the speaker, achieves "eternity" through his sacrifice. The "you" to whom the poem is addressed holds the scene of martyrdom in the "eye's mind" without, unlike the creator of the ivory statue of the saint described in the poem, the ability to express it through art. The speaker observes the failed artist turning away "To serve your time" and experiencing "Eternity refusing to begin" (*CP* 73). An early draft is an even starker reflection of his emotional state at this time: "I have learned merely from his bliss / That I live in time, that love means to be plundered" ("Saint" draft).

"The Charioteer of Delphi" tells a similar story of the failure of love and poetic inspiration. Merrill expresses a Wildean fascination with the beauty of classical sculpture (Dorian Gray's beauty is like ancient Greek marbles). The Charioteer is the bronze statue from the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi (c. 470 BC), which Merrill saw in an Athens museum in 1950 on his first trip to Greece to visit Friar.[12] (The statue had a special significance to Friar as well: a reproduction of its head appears on the masthead of a journal Friar edited, *Charioteer: Quarterly of Greek Culture.*[13]) As in Oscar Wilde and Walter Pater, the praise of classical sculpture exalts masculine beauty, which Pater considered, in contrast to the feminine beauty of nature, the beauty of art.[14] Described in an ingeniously irregular terza rima, the charioteer is another of Merrill's verbal icons. His eyes "Look shining and nowhere / Unless indeed into our own." The eyes of the viewers alone give the sculpture its significance, which reveals to them that they are "Littler than dolls wound up by a child's fear" (*CP* 74). Like the statue of St. Sebastian, the charioteer's Rilkean message is that one must change one's life by aspiring to the perfection of the sculpture. But the poem's speaker, addressing a "you" who is evidently a lover, identifies their love not with the calm of the charioteer but with the "fire and fury" of the horses that the charioteer no longer controls. The speaker declares that he has vainly implored the charioteer to "cool that havoc." With their decorous and despairing tone, "Saint" and "Charioteer" are examples of what Merrill referred to as his "chronicles of love and loss" (*Changing Light* 176).

Such chronicles may seem to enforce a stereotype of the gay poet. Merrill's early poetry does develop an "unswerving erotic pessimism," as Sedgwick says of Proust's *À la recherche* (241); and it is this very stereotype that Merrill addresses in *A Different Person*.[15] As he explains there, his desire to become a different person who was less world-weary and self-absorbed (*DP* 6, 63) motivated his decision to leave America for Europe. His psychoanalysis had the same complex purpose. Merrill has described his early poems as "verbal artifacts . . . shaped and polished and begemmed, but set on the page with never a thought of their being uttered by a living voice" (*DP* 6). At the time of *First Poems*, he conceived of his poems merely as "visual artifacts" (*Recitative* 42). Merrill even critiqued the title poem of *The Country of a Thousand Years of Peace*, the elegy for Hans Lodeizen that critics regard as the most emotional poem of the collection, for containing a strong element of "pure poetic double-talk" (*DP* 51–52).

As we have seen, Simic and other critics cite *Water Street* (1962) as the volume in which Merrill finds his mature voice. Its opening lyric, "Urban Convalescence," again reveals Merrill's affinity with Lowell in his poetic development. Merrill's poem resonates with Lowell's "For the Union Dead."[16] The personae of both Lowell's and Merrill's poems are passive observers of the destruction of a city's heritage. In Lowell's Boston, "dinosaur steamshovels" create meaningless "civic / sandpiles" (70) and threaten the Civil War relief of Colonel Shaw; in Merrill's New York, the jaws of a crane "dribble rubble" (*CP* 127) as if the "simple fact of having lasted / Threatened our cities like mysterious fires" (*CP* 129). These urban wastelands reveal, for Lowell, "a savage servility" (72) and for Merrill, "The sickness of our time" (*CP* 129). Despite the speaker's passivity, "For the Union Dead" is profoundly engaged with the political world that it denounces for its greed and inhuman violence. In contrast, the speaker of Merrill's poem is far more enclosed in the subjective world of memory, feeling the "dull need" to make "some kind of house / Out of the life lived, out of the love spent" (*CP* 129). He notes the social "sickness" without further denunciation and qualifies his critique of civic disorder, remarking that his phrase, "'the sickness of our time' / Enhances, then debases, what I feel" (*CP* 129). Lowell feels no such self-conscious reservations about his prophetic anger, and none of Merrill's hesitation to judge others even though the poet himself shares in the era's malaise.

There is of course no need to choose between the two styles. What is important in "Urban Convalescence" is it casual directness. It opens with colloquial ease—"Out for a walk, after a week in bed, / I find them tearing up part of my block" (*CP* 127)—revealing Merrill confident enough to take his everyday life as his subject. Similarly, *Water Street*'s final poem, "A Tenancy," celebrates his life in Stonington, Connecticut, with his partner David Jackson (to whom the poem is dedicated), where at the poem's conclusion he is welcoming a group of friends into his new home. As the poem begins, Merrill recalls a time when, in 1946 after his release from the army, he would have been grateful for even a few years of creative life in a peacetime world. "A Tenancy" gives thanks for his subsequent years to "the source of light" (*CP* 169), imagined here as the changing light of Stonington, and ends with a wish that applies both to his guests and his poetic audience:

> If I am host at last
> It is of little more than my own past.
> May others be at home in it. (*CP* 170)

Merrill's shift toward writing more frankly about his personal life is reflected in the number of poems in *Water Street* that explore his childhood. The volume still presents verbal icons such as "Prism" and "The Parrot Fish," and Merrill creates one of his most impressive poetic masks in "Proust." But the many autobiographical poems include "A Vision of the Garden" and "The World and the Child"; a poem that seems to be about the death of his father, "The Smile"; two poems on the death of his grandmother, "The Water Hyacinth" and "Annie Hill's Grave"; and two poems about family life, "Scenes of Childhood" and "Childlessness." To this group may be added the satiric "A Dream of Old Vienna" and "The Midnight Snack," the first two of the "Five Old Favorites" sequence. In the first poem of the sequence, a mother is deciding on a cozy evening whether "To wed the son when he has slain the father, / Or thrust the brat *at once* into the damp"; in the second, a memory of the father's characteristic "flare up" of anger disturbs the poem's protagonist when he raids the refrigerator for milk and cake (symbolic of the mother) while the stove's "black- / Browed pilot eye's blue fire" (the father) burns into his back (*CP* 152–53). When Merrill draws on such Freudian material, he resembles Lowell, Plath, and Berryman in often treating it satirically, with a sense of its comical excesses, and yet also with respect for the insights it may suggest.

In "Scenes of Childhood," the Freudian scene is not "Old Vienna" but his childhood home. A home movie his father took of his mother and two aunts (the three together suggesting the fates) reveals a "fair child, or fury— / Myself at four, in tears" (*CP* 142) emerging from the background. A spectator in the present, Merrill sees "A man's shadow mount" his mother's dress. Though he cannot of course remember why he was crying, he imagines that his father behind the camera is a shadow that "afflicts us both" (*CP* 142)—both mother and child. When the projector jams, the film catches fire as mother and son watch themselves go up in smoke. The father becomes a disappointing absence in "The World and the Child." In this beautifully cadenced villanelle, the father tiptoes backward out of the child's room and "the whole of love / Falls on the child awake and wearied of" (*CP* 147). The "whole of love" the child has experienced in childhood unfortunately included the father's betrayal. If the dying man of "The Smile," who is associated with his gold watch and "Dimes, quarters, lunatic change" (*CP* 166), is indeed Merrill's father, the treatment is again sardonic. The last object the man sees is his false teeth smiling in a tumbler of water. Yet the poem is also a compassionate account of the last days when the old man, like his jacket on a chair back, "would not / Let go his form" (*CP* 166).

Nevertheless, in Merrill's autobiographical poetry his mother rather than his father is the crucial figure. One of the questions he explored during his psychoanalysis was "why my poetics had to be so mixed up with her" (*DP* 149).[17] His father was an "almost perversely mild and undemanding presence in my thoughts, triggering none of the imaginary confrontations I have with my mother" (*DP* 42). One of these confrontations occurs in "Childlessness."The title itself refers to his mother's disappointment that, as he puts it in a later poem, the "*little feet that patter*" in Merrill's life were merely "*metrical*" ("The Emerald," *CP* 342). Although the storm in "Childlessness" is first described as the poet's "dream-wife / Ranting and raining," the personification soon expands to Mother Nature's stormy criticism (like his own mother's) of the barren "plot" of a life that should have produced "Gold pollen, gender of suns, large, hardy, / Enviable blooms" (*CP* 148). If the nonexistent blooms are children—especially boys, carrying the Merrill name—then he has failed both his mother and Mother Nature. If the blooms are poems, then he has failed his muse (his "dream" rather than his "real" wife) by not writing better ones. Either way he feels that "in my garden / Nothing is planted" (*CP* 148). He has inversely honored his mother and father by throwing off the "cloak . . . of past servitude," which falls on "the shoulders of my parents / Whom it is eating to the bone" (*CP* 149).

For all the revelations of family tensions, both "Scenes of Childhood" and "Childlessness" develop complicated cosmic metaphors for the poet's loneliness rather than the human drama of the situation. The "cloak" of "Childlessness" is also a sunrise that reveals (as do the "poisons visible at sunset") a polluted world. The final image completes the double reference to his real mother and Mother Nature, because the "cloak" represents both his rebellion against his parents and the pollution of the earth. Despite the poem's intricate organization, McClatchy observes that the poem's "evidently tortured emotional depths . . . trouble its figural surface" ("On *Water Street*" 90). The conclusion of "Scenes of Childhood" is also convoluted. In a line in which Merrill's verbal dexterity is perhaps too facile, his memory of the "sun / And air" of childhood reminds him that he is his parents' "son and heir. " Recoiling against this heritage, he searches the night sky in the hope of finding "heroes without name / Or origin."This leap from the personal to the mythic (executed far more adroitly in later poems such as "Verse for Urania") leaves him puzzling out his identity under the "shed skin" of the Milky Way and the "abyss / Of night" (*CP* 144).

Although Merrill's personal life is center stage in *Water Street*, it is not until "The Broken Home" of *Nights and Days* (1966) that he learns how not only to be the "host" of his own past but also how to "be at home in it" ("A Tenancy," *CP* 170). Autobiography is no longer concealed in symbols like the black swan, or in icons like St. Sebastian and the Charioteer. One might argue that "The Broken Home," with the possible exception of "A Tenancy," marks the first time Merrill writes a poem *as* "James Merrill." To say that Merrill is writing in propria persona is not to deny that, in any presentation of oneself in words, a persona is projected that cannot precisely be identified with the writer. Merrill found a useful means of referring to himself through the "JM" of *The Changing Light at Sandover*," which he referred to in *A Different Person* as "the semi-fictional JM" (*DP* 77). When asked by an interviewer what he would say to reviewers who claim that he is autobiographical, Merrill replied, "To *sound* personal is the point" (*Recitative* 27). As I have suggested, Merrill's way of "sounding" personal in "The Broken Home" resembles Robert Lowell's in *Life Studies*. Merrill uses details from his actual historical life.[18] Although he writes about his family in many earlier poems, the angry father and distressed mother of a poem such as "Scenes of Childhood" are generalized figures that could be anyone's parents. As McClatchy notes, the characters in *Water Street* sometimes have "a typological rather than an autobiographical emphasis" ("On *Water Street*" 88).

In "The Broken Home" the father is the Wall Street investor who married every thirteenth year. The mother is the specific woman whose marriage, as the fifth sonnet dramatizes, was already strained in "the fall / Of 1931" (*CP* 198). The "real house [that] became a boarding school," with its long corridors, ballroom, favorite dog, and affectionately remembered servant, is the actual family house at Southampton that was willed to Amherst College after Charles Merrill's death and later became a boy's boarding school.[19] Merrill is writing as the son of a financial baron just as Lowell writes as the scion of a prominent Boston family. And they both write with the confidence that their family's place in the history of our time gives their versions of the family's crises a special significance. As in much confessional verse, there can be no neat distinction between the actual person and the poetic persona. In "The Broken Home," Merrill's persona becomes truly autobiographical rather than typological.

We saw earlier that this sonnet sequence analyzes the trauma arising from the divorce of Merrill's parents. Although his mother is still the medusa of his early verse, the mythological reference is embedded in the literal details of his mother's bedroom, her outspread black hair, and her cold eyes. Yet the theme of "The Broken Home" is not so much what the parents have made of the child but what he has made of himself. As in "Childlessness," the images of growth and reproduction are associated with Merrill's own creativity. The halting, roughly trimeter lines of the first sonnet describe a glimpse of a neighboring family at their window, "gleaming like fruit / With evening's mild gold leaf." As the need to write this very poem comes to him (he has "opened a book of maxims. / The flame quickens"), the poet asks the "tongue of fire" to tell him that "you and I are as real / At least as the people upstairs" (*CP* 197). The answer the sequence implies is not reassuring.

In the fifth sonnet Merrill admits that he has ironically "honored and obeyed" his parents by his own failure to love. He wryly adds at the opening of the sixth poem that he has obeyed them "inversely," with a play on the negative term *invert* to describe a homosexual (*CP* 199). (And of course the sonnets honor them "in verse.") *Invert* connotes the "inversion" that, according to late nineteenth-century psychology, results from feminine qualities dominating masculine in the biological male.[20] Slyly, Merrill accepts the stereotype of the "invert" as artistic and passive. Merrill not only writes more directly about himself in this sequence, he also exposes his most vulnerable qualities. The line about honoring his parents "inversely" is followed by an admission that his critics have used against him: "I rarely buy a newspaper, or vote" (*CP* 199). Like the persona of "Childlessness," his garden does not contain "enviable blooms." Instead, he cultivates an "avocado in a glass of water," with roots "gemmed with air; it grows "small gilt leaves" until

> Fleshy and green, I let them die, yes, yes,
> And start another. I am earth's no less. (*CP* 199)

This softly rhymed couplet is Merrill's quiet defense of what we saw him admitting was a "begemmed" style as he acknowledges (ironically) that the critics of his early poetry were right. In an age of political revolt, he (like Wilde's Dorian Gray) never even reads the newspapers.[21] In an age of poetic experimentation, he writes sonnets in which the appropriate metaphor for his poems are the avocado's "gilt leaves," a dying sprout with gemlike air bubbles clinging to its roots. Like drafts of poems, the leaves die only to be revised again and again. Against this portrait of the writer as an aesthete, or even an invert, Merrill offers his defense that "I am earth's no less." This phrase echoes one in the sonnet's octave when he asserts that "I am no less time's child" than those who "on the barricades risk life and limb" (*CP* 199).

Taken alone, "The Broken Home" may indeed seem an admission of rather than a defense against the criticism of Merrill's aestheticism. In the sequence's last lines, the poet is imagining his childhood home where the colors of a sunset (paralleling the sunset of the first sonnet) recall the Irish setter that accompanied him into his mother's forbidden bedroom. Despite his enlarged understanding of it, he cannot break free of "The Broken Home." In "The Making of a Writer: Condemned to Write about Real Things," Merrill wrote that "Trying for a blank mind, I catch myself instead revisiting a childhood bedroom on Long Island" (10). The sequence answers yes to the question Merrill poses in *A Different Person*: "Do I conclude that my life has been less a flight from the Broken Home than a cunning scale model of it?" (155). But in two other poems in *Nights and Days,* "The Thousand and Second Night" and "From the Cupola," his mood is no longer defensive. In terms of his autobiographical art, we need only note here that both the personae of "From the Cupola" and "The Thousand and Second Night" are named "James," and the latter poem analyzes what Merrill's homosexuality has meant to his development as a man and as a poet. Such poems announce a new phase of Merrill's career that explores the territory opened up in poems such as "The Broken Home."

In describing the obliqueness of Merrill's early poetry, and showing how his later autobiographical poetry becomes more direct and powerful, I seem to be repeating the story that James Longenbach believes is too often and too easily told about postmodern poets—the "breakthrough narrative." Longenbach writes that the "breakthrough" pattern was set by Lowell, who indeed showed his contemporaries how ambitious and accomplished a poetic career could be. Longenbach writes that Lowell's breakthrough story "goes like this":

> after writing several books of highly praised New Critical well-wrought urns (objective and impersonal), Robert Lowell understood that poetry could be fragmentary, subjective, personal, and the result was *Life Studies,* a watershed in twentieth-century poetry. (5)

To a significant degree, this actually is the general pattern of Merrill's development, and not unlike the story he told of himself. However, his breakthrough into a more direct style is not the dramatic one attributed to Lowell or Plath. It developed slowly in the volumes *Water Street* and *Nights and Days* as Merrill looked into the sources of the mythic emblems and icons of his earlier work. His development was the gradual one Vendler describes as a "sedulous examination of the inner life and the family romance." The development began with Merrill's psychoanalysis and continued for some 15 years before he achieved the insight displayed in "The Broken Home." Merrill had to remake himself, to become as much as possible a different person, before he could find that person's voice. The breakthrough was above all the discovery that his "inversion," his unique way of seeing life, was something to explore and not conceal.

Notes

1. In "On *Water Street,*" J. D. McClatchy writes that Lowell's *Life Studies'* "autobiographical emphasis may well have helped Merrill to fashion the circumstantial intimacy" of Merrill's "Urban Convalescence," which he compares to Lowell's "Beyond the Alps" as a poem that puts an earlier phase of the poet's career behind him (65–66).

2. In addition to Kalstone's and Vendler's, another important treatment of Merrill's autobiographical poetry is Richard Sáez's "James Merrill's Oedipal Fire," which deals with poems later than "The Broken Home," especially "18 West 11th Street." McClatchy writes that Merrill's poetry in *Water Street*

> is not itself autobiographical in any documentary sense. Unlike the sometimes flat transcripts of Ginsberg or Lowell, it does not serve up the raw events of Merrill's "outer" life or the overdetermined accidents of his emotional dealings. (69)

One of the best analyses of "The Broken Home" appears in Don Adams's *James Merrill's Poetic Quest.*

3. *CP* means Merrill's *Collected Poems.*

4. J. D. McClatchy notes the extraordinary fact that the basic situation of this poem—a child's peek at his mother while she is sleeping—was the subject of a poem that Merrill wrote and his mother copied out and dated 29 Oct. 1932, when Merrill was six years old. A facsimile of the poem appears in McClatchy, "James Merrill's Inner Room" (13). McClatchy comments on "the autobio-

graphical and narrative thrust of his work, his sense of a life lived and understood over time" (5).

5. *DP* means Merrill's *A Different Person*.

6. In this draft of "The Broken Home," Merrill describes a toy soldier dressed in the helmet and leggings of World War I as being soft like a child. The lead soldier has literally gone through fire much as the child has experienced his parents' fiery passions. The imagery of heat and cold one finds in "The Broken Home" is more noticeable in the draft.

7. In "The Man Who Couldn't Remember," Friar recalls that Merrill told him that "The Black Swan" was a "portrait of me, for I turned ebony every summer" (65). Merrill also refers to him as the "black swan" in their correspondence.

8. This translation appears in Merrill's hand in the copy of *The Black Swan* in the James Merrill papers.

9. In "The Man Who Couldn't Remember," Friar said "The Perseus-poet must conquer Medusa (form) again and again, every time he starts out on a new and more complex conquest of the volatile, confused thoughts and emotions within him" (69).

10. For an account of the reception of Merrill's early poetry, see Rotella's introduction to his *Critical Essays.* Two of the criticisms of *First Poems* that Rotella mentions particularly affected Merrill: James Dickey's criticism that Merrill was one of the "agreeable craftsmen of the forties and fifties who promised most and delivered least," and Louise Bogan's that everything about his poems "smells of the lamp; they are as frigid and dry as diagrams" (4).

11. Merrill wrote to Thomas Howkins on 4 Oct. 1952 that he has been in analysis since the preceding August.

12. I am indebted to Langdon Hammer for this information.

13. The journal had only one issue (Summer 1960), in which Merrill's "Charioteer" appeared.

14. See Cassandra Laity, ch. 3, "Writing the Decadent Boy Androgyne."

15. In "Days of 1971," Merrill himself describes the relevance to his own life of what he calls "Proust's law," whereby one's lover denies the very thing one most desires, or else grants it after it is no longer desired (*CP* 349).

16. I am not suggesting that Lowell's poem influenced Merrill's. Lowell read his poem in 1960 for the Boston Arts Festival, and it was first published in *The*

Atlantic Monthly for November 1960. "An Urban Convalescence" first appeared in the *Partisan Review* for Winter 1960.

17. In "James Merrill's Inner Room," J. D. McClatchy writes of Merrill's defiance of his mother when he decided to publish his memoir *A Different Person,* which discusses his conflicts with his mother over his sexuality and describes details of sexual encounters in Rome that are indeed the kind of "raw" revelations that are confessional by any definition of the term. In *A Different Person,* Merrill imagines a conversation he never had with his mother in which she tells him, "Don't imagine, son, that these are things people need to know," and his own reply, "But they are things I need to tell" (192).

18. In *Creating Another Self,* Samuel Maio describes the "confessional voice" as "the poet chronicling his public self's personal history" (30).

19. I am indebted to Bruce Merrill, James Merrill's nephew, for this information.

20. As recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary,* H. Ellis used the term in *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897) in describing the "sexual invert [who] is specially liable to suffer from a high degree of neurasthenia"; and in 1911 R. W. Chambers characterized "pale, enraptured artists" as "unwashed little inverts." In *Epistemology of the Closet,* Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick defines "inversion" in her discussion of Proust's Baron Charlus as "captivity and occultation of a true female self within his deceptively, even defensively[,] masculine exterior" (233). Merrill makes a similar play on the term *inverse* in *The Changing Light at Sandover* when Auden tells JM: "THE TYPE U SET JM, INVERTED & BACKWARD, / IS YET READ RIGHT SIDE UP ON THE BIOLOGICAL PAGE" (216).

21. When Dorian Gray is asked if he writes for the newspapers, he answers, "I never even read them" (Wilde 45).

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Classicism and Colonial Retrenchment in W. B. Yeats's "No Second Troy"

Martin McKinsey

"From the moment I began *The Wanderings of Oisin,"* wrote W. B. Yeats of the title poem of his 1889 collection, "my subject-matter became Irish" (*Poems*[1] 589). By his own account, Yeats struck out in this new poetic direction largely at the urging of the returned Fenian exile John O'Leary, even though such a move meant leaving behind "Arcady and the India of romance," which up until then he had "preferred to all countries" (Ellmann 13). In place of those well-thumbed tropes of British Hellenism and Orientalism, the young poet now began to avail himself of the rich but still largely untapped stock of legends and mythological figures out of Ireland's own past. Thus the gleaming visions of Greek antiquity that had inspired so many of Yeats's early models, especially his beloved Shelley, fell victim to the expediencies of cultural nationalism. Indeed, for the first two and a half decades of Yeats's writing life, Hellenism left scarcely a trace in the poems he chose to publish and preserve.[2] "The woods of Arcady are dead," begins the speaker of "The Song of the Happy Shepherd," the inaugural utterance of Yeats's poetic career as reconstructed in his *Collected Poems,* "And over are its antique joys." Given the Irish poet's polemics and artistic practice during these early years, it is easy to endow the shepherd's words with the force of synecdoche. Though ancient Greece and, in particular, Homer continued as mainstays of Yeats's journalism, his poetry was left to stand on its own.

The so-called "Helen poems" published in *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* in 1910 therefore mark a significant departure. In a series of short lyrics issuing from his troubled relationship with Maud Gonne, Yeats for the first time brings ancient Greece into an important poetic dialogue with modern Ireland. While the volume's stylistic innovations have frequently been commented on, and will figure prominently in the pages that follow, my primary focus in the present essay will be to register and assess this *thematic* development, that is, the reemergence of the Hellenic in Yeats's verse two full decades after the Celtic turn signaled by *The Wanderings of Oisin*. By returning the earliest and most important of these poems to the particularity and turbulence of its historical and biographical moment, I show how Yeats deployed Hellenism as an imaginative Third Space (to use Homi K. Bhabha's term) in which to mediate conflicting personal, political, ethnic, and artistic affiliations. Yeats's Homericism, I argue, encodes the crisscrossing social and sectarian fracture lines that characterize a colonized society swiftly moving toward national self-sovereignty. Recent critics have followed the lead of Seamus Deane and Edward Said in situating Yeats's poetry and the Celtic Revival generally within the broader theoretical framework of postcolonial studies.[3] My essay draws on their work, but perhaps its greatest debt is to R. F. Foster's 1997 biography, a major synthesis of new and old archival material handled with great historical acumen. My principal aim has been to open a familiar poem to fresh readings in the light of this recent scholarship, but I have two ancillary aims as well: first, to begin to define Hellenism—the classical Greek tradition as revived in the modern West—as a locus of postcolonial agon; and second, by tracing the interplay of politics and poetic form, to suggest heretofore neglected links between the particularized pressures and residues of cultural decolonization, and the emergence of Anglo-American literary modernism.

The Wanderings of Oisin was a symbolist lyric awakened to epic designs by the imperatives of cultural reconstruction. Thereafter, Yeats's nationalist and epic impulses were increasingly channeled into prose and verse dramas like *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902) and *On Baile's Strand* (1904). Elsewhere I have argued that the earlier poem, like the later dramas, silently invokes Greek precedents (under the guise of Celtic myth) in order to bolster its claim to foundational authority (see McKinsey). When, 20 years after *Oisin,* Yeats did finally come to make overt use of Homeric motifs—partly, Brian Arkins suggests, under the influence of his friend Oliver St. John Gogarty (85)—it was not in epic form but in a form that would characterize virtually all his mature work: "lyric poetry . . . knit by dramatic tension" (*Essays* 521). Nevertheless the first-born and most dramatic of these Homeric poems, "No Second Troy," manages to achieve within its lyric constraints a certain compressed epic stature:

No Second Troy

Why should I blame her that she filled my days
With misery, or that she would of late
Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,
Or hurled the little streets upon the great
Had they but courage equal to desire?
What could have made her peaceful with a mind
That nobleness made simple as a fire,
With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind
That is not natural in an age like this,
Being high and solitary and most stern?
Why, what could she have done, being what she is?
Was there another Troy for her to burn? (*Poems* 91)

Yeats's poem allies itself with the epic tradition first and foremost through classical allusion, and through micropoetic effects that Elizabeth Cullingford labels "poetic 'manliness.'"[4] But it is also a matter of structure, the way the poem yokes together private and public turmoil, the individual and the transhistorical. The effect is something like a Renaissance portrait: in the foreground we see an aristocratic beauty possessed of classical poise; from the word *misery,* we surmise that this is Maud Gonne, the only woman, it appears, with the power so deeply to trouble the poet in life. Behind her, we distinguish angry mobs, burning cities. This seamless welding of domains is done so deliberately, and Yeats's case was so particular in its tumbling together of the personal and the political, that it makes little sense, for this poem, to speak of cultural or social allegory as Fredric Jameson describes it in a much-discussed essay:

> Third-world texts, even those which are seemingly private . . . necessarily project a political dimension in the form of a national allegory: the story of private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of public third-world culture and society. (69)

By 1908, Yeats and Gonne had already themselves become part allegory, part of Ireland's social imaginary. Yeats had envisioned Gonne in the title role of his *Cathleen ni Houlihan,* a play about an old crone (traditionally identified with Ireland itself) who during the Wolfe Tone Rising is magically transformed by the patriotism of Mayo peasants into "a young girl

[with] the walk of a queen" (*Collected Plays* 88). When Gonne acted the role in its 1902 debut, she *was* Ireland. Six years later, as the dark lady of "No Second Troy," she was arguably still Ireland, but a very different Ireland. As we shall see, the distance between these two visions of the poet's homeland can serve as a gauge of what those intervening years had meant for Yeats.

The mythological identification of the poem's female subject is withheld until the last line, then disclosed only by inference. Until that defining question—"Was there another Troy for her to burn?"—she is a classic Petrarchan object of male desire, as notable for "being what she is" as for what she does, and for her effect on the men around her: the misery she causes the poet (which in turn causes the poem to be written), and the violence she induces in others. It is a catalytic quality she shares with Cathleen ni Houlihan—and, of course, Helen of Troy[5]—but in terms of literary genealogies and nationalist implications, Yeats's 1902 and 1908 heroines could not be farther apart.

Yeats's Helen, like his Petrarchism generally, comes to him by way of Pierre Ronsard, author of the *Sonnets pour Hélène.* Yeats had already imitated one of these in "When You Are Old" (1891) and would soon do so again in "At the Abbey Theatre" (1911). In "No Second Troy," he borrows not only the figure of Helen but also something of Ronsard's classical restraint, that "severe discipline of [the] French" that earlier he had prescribed for Irish playwrights (*Explorations* 80). In place of the Shakespearean sonnet, Yeats offers us (as he had in "When You Are Old") a pared-down French variation, the douzaine. In place of the Elizabethan's jagged bipolarities, he offers the statuesque poise of the Pleiade, a kind of "grace under pressure" portending high modernist styles to come. In a definitional move we recognize from *Oisin,* Yeats routes himself around England in his quest to nationalize both the sonnet form and the Homeric inheritance.[6] After all, "the [Irish] national character," he had written in 1901, "is so essentially different from the English that Spanish and French influences may be the most healthy" (*Explorations* 76). Following in the footsteps of the insurrectionist Wolfe Tone, Yeats found it expedient to recruit allies from the Continent when mounting his challenge to English cultural domination.

This is not to deny that there were good circumstantial reasons for Yeats's literary imagination to gravitate toward France (rather than Spain or, indeed, Renaissance Italy, which would soon figure so prominently in his thought), for it was in France that Maud Gonne herself was living. In the summer of 1908, and again the following December, Yeats had spent time with her in Paris. Gonne clearly supplied the poem's occasion, but some of its imagery may well have come from elsewhere in her Parisian household (possibly foreshadowing an infatuation to come). Foster writes:

> [Gonne's daughter] Iseult was now a charming and precocious fourteen-year-old, appealing particularly to Yeats through *her passion for the classics (notably the "Ilead")*: "she all but *set the house on fire* by making a burnt offering on the mantelpiece to Artemis a few days ago." (Foster and Yeats qtd. in Foster 387; emphasis added)

The French capital also provided Yeats with a chance to indulge his own recent passion for classicism:

> Ten years ago when I was last in Paris I loved all that was mysterious and gothic and hated all that was classic and severe . . . now I am all for David and above all Ingres whose Perseus is all classic romance—the poetry of . . . clear farsighted eyes.
> (qtd. in Foster 388–89)

Classicism, as it emerged in his poetry, supplied Yeats with a lens through which to reconsider and refurbish his image of Gonne—and through her of Ireland itself—as distilled in the figure of Helen of Troy. His Helen, however, is not the soft and fatally alluring beauty out of Homer but rather the very embodiment of classical severity, more a Greek goddess than Menelaus's all too human spouse. The question is, which goddess? In the late poem "Beautiful Lofty Things," Yeats compares the Gonne of his youth to "Pallas Athena in that straight back and arrogant head" (*Poems* 303). But in "No Second Troy," the allusion to a bow, coupled with attributes like "solitary" and "stern," takes us back to the object of Iseult's burnt offering: Artemis. As the goddess of the mountains and the wilds, Artemis was a deity of "high and solitary" places. A virgin goddess, she shared Gonne's professed "horror and terror of physical love" (Gonne qtd. in Foster 203), and was "most stern" in punishing male intruders like Acteon. As Edna Longley has observed, "Yeats was reluctantly compelled to recognize Gonne as Amazon rather than icon" (207)—Amazons being "mortal byforms" of Artemis (Pomeroy 5).

If markedly more warlike than *Oisin*'s Niamh, that sensual emanation of the Celtic Twilight, this Artemis is also notably more aristocratic than barefoot Cathleen ni Houlihan, itinerant among the Mayo cottages. Here, too, the goddess bears traces of her French sojourn where, Romanized as Diana, she acquired considerable refinement through her association in Ronsard's day with Diane de Poitiers, Henry II's favorite, and by her subsequent sculpting in marble or in bronze on the fountains, gates, and allées of countless Renaissance chateaus. Yeats had ample opportunity, during his own sojourns in Paris, to trace her classical lineaments in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century specimens on display in the Louvre. But his imagination also had access to literary models closer to home. If he bestowed on his heroine some of the "rock-nurtured" fire of his own Aoife ("The Grey Rock," *Poems* 105), he also gave her some of the queenly grace and "dread majesty" of Spenser's Belphoebe, who "[like] Diana . . . Wandereth alone with bow and arrows keen" (2.3.31.1, 31.4).[7] (Only a few years before, Yeats had edited a selection of Spenser's verse.) Yet however mixed and decidedly cosmopolitan her parentage, the multinational heroine of "No Second Troy" had an important Irish role to play in the poet's evolving mythology of his homeland.

In the 10 years since his return, in 1897, to "an active Irish life" (*Explorations* 235), Yeats had not been a stranger to the disillusionment and chagrin that can be the lot of a colonial idealist home from the metropole. His labors in Dublin as a playwright and theater manager, first with the Irish Literary Theater, then with the National Theater at the Abbey, brought him face to face with "those enemies of life, the chimeras of the Pulpit and the Press" (*Essays* 119). Then, in 1903, on the heels of her role in *Cathleen,* Maud Gonne had married the nationalist figure John MacBride, which had the effect of estranging Yeats not only from Gonne herself (temporarily) but also from the more militant forms of Irish nationalism like the IRB; in any case, his contact with these groups had been primarily for her sake. Yeats reacted to such chafings and ruptures not by retreating into a retrograde West Britonism nor, for all his growing fame, by escaping into cosmopolitan disengagement. Rather, he began inventing a new Irish identity for himself, one that reclaimed for Irish nationalism a tradition frequently demonized in the charged rhetoric of post-Famine politics. By 1907, according to Foster, Yeats "was becoming interested in the traditions of the [Anglo-Irish] caste and family background which he had been elaborately repudiating for twenty years"

(375). The cooling of his relations with Gonne and with nationalist Ireland had been amply compensated and perhaps even precipitated by his growing attachment to the socially more conservative culture of the Big House, as embodied for Yeats by Lady Gregory and her estate at Coole Park, where he was a frequent guest. Though the poet's apotheosis of Ascendency figures like Swift and Burke was still to come, the classicism of "No Second Troy" was substantially the classicism of their eighteenth century, "that one Irish century that escaped from darkness and confusion" (*Explorations* 345).

In "No Second Troy," Maud Gonne is made willy-nilly to represent that tradition and to body forth its ideals. As a statuesque sister to the goddess Diana, the presiding deity of Renaissance pastorals, this most urban of women serves as emblem for the rural charms of the Anglo-Irish country estate. The tightened bow to which Gonne is likened invokes the hunt that was for Yeats an integral part of that culture. (Yeats first associated archery with Coole Park in the title poem of his previous collection, *In the Seven Woods:* "while that Great Archer / Who but awaits His hour to shoot, still hangs / a cloudy quiver over Pairc-na-lee" [*Poems* 77].)[8] In addition, Gonne's beauty is described in terms suggesting the aristocratic virtues of that class, as Yeats conceived it: self-control, elevation, nobility. As such, she represents for Yeats (as had, differently, Niamh and Cathleen before her) "that ideal Ireland, perhaps from this point out an imaginary Ireland, in whose service I labor," as he wrote in the 1907 essay "Poetry and Tradition" (*Essays* 246).

In the process of defining an ideal Ireland through its Helen-Gonne figure, "No Second Troy" simultaneously profiles the real (or "natural") Ireland that constitutes its opposite: if Helen-Gonne is "high," the latter must be "low"; if she is "solitary" (Yeats would later write of an "Anglo-Irish solitude"), it is populous; where she is "most stern," it, presumably, is "lax." Low, populous, lax of habit—one suspects that the portrait that emerges of the "natural" here owes something to Anglo-Irish stereotypes of those products of "mean rooftrees,"[9] the unwashed Catholic majority.

Yet like all such binomial schemata in Yeats, this opposition is riven with paradox. For even as Helen-Gonne defines her class, she betrays it. It is perhaps in keeping with the historical origins of that class that the poem's female protagonist has been engaged "of late" in the paradigmatic colonialist pastime: teaching the ignorant. Yeats's heroine, however, would instill in her pupils not what Edward Gibbon termed "the arts of peace and civil policy" (442)—the highest achievement of European civilization—but "violent ways." It was not so much the violence that disturbed Yeats—he was well on his way to the philosophic militarism of his prime—as its misapplication: for like Artemis turning the hounds on Acteon, Gonne would unleash Ireland's little upon its great. To preach such Thyrsitian insubordination was to threaten the social hierarchy and moral economy that governed Yeats's vision of both the Homeric world and the ideal Ireland for which it stood.

Of course the poem's blame, retracted but nevertheless persisting under erasure,[10] masks a deeper wounding than class. For Gonne had compounded her betrayal immeasurably by fraternizing with the commoners—or, as Yeats increasingly felt, consorting with the enemy. She had gone farther than the activist Gore-Booth sisters, against whom the poet inveighs elsewhere, by marrying a man like MacBride. Yeats's arguments with her on this point, the more pitiful for being too late, are again imbued with all the prejudices of his emergent Anglo-Irish identity. To marry MacBride, he told her, was to "fall into a lower order": "You come to the people from above. You represent a superior class." Catholicism, to which she had converted, represented "a lower order of faith" (Yeats qtd. in Foster 285). The guiding principle of the Ascendency—in Yeats's determined construction of it as a "Protestant aristocracy"—was the notion of "the best knit to the best." (The weakness for eugenics which looms so large in his later work was already well advanced.) Gonne's mismatched union with MacBride mirrored her perverted politics—hurling "the little streets upon the great"—by allowing his "low" to top her "high." It was an imagined scene of transgression that Yeats would revisit often—most centrally in the play *Purgatory,* published in the last year of his life:

> This night she is no better than her man
> And does not mind that he is half drunk,
> She is mad about him. They mount the stairs
> She brings him into her own chamber.
> And that is the marriage-chamber now.
> . . . .
> She should have known he was not her kind.
> (*Collected Plays* 686–87)

In the end, however, "No Second Troy" is Gonne's writ of absolution. The blame is not hers, the poem tells us, but the times—or Time itself. For like Oisin in St. Patrick's Ireland, Gonne was out of phase (as Yeats would come to think of it) with the world around her. "[B]red to be a hero's wage," her "eyes set upon far / magnificence / upon impossible heroism," she found herself in a place and age bereft of heroes, with only a "drunken, vainglorious lout" like MacBride to claim her.[11] If she was now "solitary," this was the reason. She was a Cathleen ni Houlihan lacking a Michael Gillane, the *spéirbhean* of a traditional *aisling* poem without Irishmen (however misdirected) whose courage might equal their desire.

If Yeats was able to sympathize and forgive, this was in large measure due to the way the predicament of his one-time Petrarchan tormentor mirrored his own as an artist. For just as there was no other Troy for a Helen to burn, so was there no other Troy for a would-be Homer to write about. The "brainless patriotic force" Yeats so often locked polemic horns with in Dublin was not the stuff of epic; here he could not hope to find "Character isolated by a deed / To engross the present and dominate memory" (Yeats qtd. in Foster 365; *Poems* 347). A few years later, in the poem "September 1913," Yeats would pronounce Romantic Ireland "dead and gone" (*Poems* 108); in "No Second Troy" he had already buried heroic Ireland.

This judgment, registered first in the clipped, percussive finality of the title, is central to the poem's morphology. In *Oisin* Yeats had presumed to speak in the voice of tradition, to transume the medieval Irish genre of Christian-pagan dialogue in a long poem with strong nationalist overtones; "No Second Troy" commences with an unmediated lyric "I"—the "I" of a thousand Petrarchan recriminations. The earlier poem had, in its epic modality, rehearsed the consolidation of the state; its textual extensiveness figured that of a free and independent polity. "No Second Troy," by contrast, is an allegory of epic curtailment. Its verbal musculature records the Laocoönian effort to wrestle the epic impulse into a lyric mold. That this mold should consist of 12 rather than 14 iambic pentameter lines further accentuates the poem's excruciating sense of limitation: "No Second Troy" is a sonnet in search of a concluding couplet, a poem about frustrated desire that enacts its own unfulfillment.

Hellenism performs a darker role within this straitened poetic economy. In his early articles and essays, particularly his *Letters to the New*

Island, Yeats had recruited Greece as inspiration and blueprint in his project of cultural uplift: Greece was pure potential, a symbol for all that Ireland might become. The analogy of Homer had underwritten *Oisin's* nationalist aspirations, investing with epic aura the raveled stories and dimmed historic destiny of a subject people. In *The Green Helmet* poems, Yeats dissolves this authorizing partnership. The comparison between Ireland and Greece henceforth will be one of unlikeness. The Greek frame of "No Second Troy"—title, last line—serves to damn rather than to redeem, heightening the contrast between then and now, here and there, ideal and actual. In the peculiar reverse perspective of classicism, what should be the temporal foreground—modern Ireland—is dwarfed by its classical parallel, reduced to a Lilliputian world of "little streets" inhabited by knaves and dolts, Paudeens and Biddys. Only Maud Gonne is magnified; she alone inhabits the mythic frame the poet has constructed in order to show her true dimensions as "a woman Homer sung." All else "at one common level lies."[12] In the relative universe into which Yeats's post-Nietzschean thought was advancing, each half of the analogy illuminated the other. Against Yeats's vision of present entropy, Homer stands as an unrepeatable poetic event: to say "No Second Troy" is to say of Ireland, in bitter retraction, that it is "No Second Greece." Colonial belatedness is affirmed.

This takes us close to the territory of epic foundering touched on in Tennyson's "The Epic."[13] What separates Yeats's poem from its Victorian antecedents is the insistence of its questioning, the furious intensity with which it burns through the fuse of its measures to detonate in the final line. It is a fury born of colonial disillusion and chagrin. Like his own Oisin 20 years earlier, Yeats had suffered a rocky homecoming. The 10 years of "embittered controversy" that attended his cultural activism in Dublin "rang down the curtain . . . on what was called 'The Celtic Movement'" (*Explorations* 72). It also rang in a distinctively new style that, in light of its subsequent influence, deserves a closer look.

The emergence of what for convenience I will label Yeats's "mature" style has been linked by recent critics to, alternately, the poet's involvement with the theater, his absorption in the writings of Nietzsche, and his need to sever the cultural apron strings binding him to "mother Britannia."[14] This last interpretation is surely correct in foregrounding the oppositional nature of this transformation and locating it within the family romance of colonialism; nevertheless it is important to remember that the primary focus of Yeats's oppositional vigor at this formative stage was not the colonizer—though Yeats's "hatred" of the English nation continued unabated—but rather elements within his own "fool-driven land" ("All Things Can Tempt Me," *Poems* 97). Like many a lettered returnee to the colonial margin, filled with "many misconceptions" regarding his particular Ithaca,[15] Yeats was stricken by the gap between the Innisfree he was at liberty to imagine from abroad and the dingy disputatious fact of colonial reality in which he found himself mired; between (as he puts it in "The Fisherman") "What I had hoped t'would be / To write for my own race / And the reality" (*Poems* 148). In response to the trauma of reentry, he chose not Dedalian exile and cunning but (to shift Homeric paradigms) an Achilles-like wrath, born out of embattled pride and ambition.

Yeats refitted his verse to reflect this psychic reorientation. His poetry of "The Celtic Movement," under the influence of William Morris, had adopted as its aesthetic emblem the pacific and traditionally feminine art of weaving. Things were "wrought" (as if "wrought" were the past participle of "weave") "out of moonlit vapours" or "with silken thread" or "with glimmering hands" or "with music" (*Poems* 62, 66, 72, 369). Now Yeats sought a more resistive medium that would suggest the refractory national element in which he moved: something hammered, Hephaestean. The poetry that resulted was a fighting poetry, one suited to the skirmishes and standoffs of a nation being born. Yeats had made the characteristic high modernist move into the "masculine." Shorn of its Petrarchan passion and with a heavier measure of Gallic irony, the style would find an echo in younger contemporaries like Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot (whose parallel political reaction and metropolitan exile are themselves open to postcolonial readings).[16] Given these later reverberations, and given high modernism's customary casting as a predominantly metropolitan enterprise, it is all the more essential to recognize the cultural specificity of Yeats's stylistic gesture, its genesis "amid [the] riot and great anger" of intracolonial contestation (*Explorations* 230). Little wonder that it struck a chord with later writers of decolonization like Chinua Achebe and Derek Walcott.

More narrowly, we can say that the prosodic constriction that typifies Yeats's style during this period embodies in verse the defensive reflex of a colonial elite made vulnerable by the gathering momentum of an exclusionary Irish Catholic nationalism. Yeats figures this threat of counterdisenfranchisement in the Anglo-Irish solitude of his Helen, which is portrayed (with agency reversed) as a kind of sublime renunciation, akin to Gonne's foreswearing of her Catholic husband. Ramazani, following Yeats, correlates the poet's preference for "lyric poems that are tense and compact" to geographical factors: their origin on an island with "Great hatred. Little room" (86). In light of the foregoing, we can extend this formulation: in contrast to *Oisin*'s symbolic assertion of territorial reach, "No Second Troy" represents a strategic retrenchment, a digging-in behind more defensible boundaries: the boundaries of the country demesne. (Twenty years later, this instinct would find its purest and most concentrated expression in the emblem—both textual and concrete—of a Norman tower.) We should not be fooled by this defensive posture, however. Contractility (to borrow a term from physiology) is a measure of strength: the implied violence of Artemis's tightened bow. Indeed, Yeats's new style did nothing so much as release for his poetry the combativeness and aggression that drives his early polemical prose.

Into this tense space Hellenism interposes itself. Whatever its class affiliations elsewhere—and for Yeats class and classicism were never far apart—here it serves to muffle such social divisions. Reversing the covert strategy of *Oisin,* "No Second Troy" uses Greece to disguise its origins in sectarian feuding, displacing social reality into myth. This subterfuge allows Yeats to advance his attack as universalist critique, and at the same time diffuses the object of that attack into an abstract function of history: "an age like this." Anglo-American critics intent on the transnational scope of literary modernism long took this tactical maneuver more or less at face value, a simplification that under the circumstances the poet might have welcomed. The truth is that Yeats's imagination continued to be enmeshed in the material "complexities of mire [and] blood" that defined the Irish culture wars at the start of the last century. If Yeats summoned the figure of Helen to his side, it was because he believed she (as opposed to Gonne, who by then had withdrawn from public life) might still have something to contribute in the struggle over his country's future.

In the ever-narrowing funnel of nationalist politics, the "Irishness" of the Anglo-Irish was a disputed issue. Efforts to define a Celtic essence that would justify and unify an independent Ireland were not always motivated to accommodate the Protestant minority, who were resented by many as a colonialist imposition. Yeats, the highly visible and vocal leader of a movement and a theater company dominated by the Anglo-Irish, was often the target of what he termed the "Nationalist attacks . . . of ignorant men" (*Explorations* 239). There is both irony and poetic justice in this, for Yeats, along with his mostly Anglo-Irish associates in the Celtic Revival, had been instrumental in stoking this renewed nationalist fervor, while also supplying it (as Edward Said has pointed out) with many of its most forceful nativist tropes. To a degree, Yeats and to some extent even his class were now paying the price for this early zeal. But here Helen might intercede on their behalf, in the name of cultural diversity. This Latinized Anglo-Irish "half-Asiatic" Greek whom Yeats had evolved out of the strong personality of Maud Gonne came to Yeats's countrymen with a message: that the surest way "to give Ireland a hardy and shapely national character [was] by opening the doors to the four winds of the world, instead of leaving the door that is towards the east wind [toward England] open alone" (*Explorations* 76). Indeed, one of the poem's unvoiced questions, no less rhetorical than the rest, is whether an awareness of Homeric precedent might not give Ireland the fortitude—the "courage equal to desire"—to stand up to its English satraps. After all (as the young Yeats had written), "without her possibly mythical siege of Troy, perhaps, Greece would never have had her real Thermopylae" (Jeffares, *W. B. Yeats* xii). By such relatively quiet means, and for all her encoding of traditional prejudice, Helen made the case for cultural openness, for making room within Ireland's narrow borders for the ethnically impure and the historically tainted. In pardoning Helen ("Why should I blame her . . . ?") Yeats argued by analogy for the pardoning of his class.

And yet the kernel of bitterness around which the poem was formed came from Yeats's pained foreknowledge that this was a deal unlikely to go through. The doubleness of the poem's structure—Troy/No Troy—is exactly the gap between "What [he] had hoped . . . and the reality." Helen stands first and foremost for the "imaginary Ireland" Yeats had undertaken, in romantic arrogance, to conjure into being. He had imagined Ireland's reconstitution as a kind of Arnoldian cultural eugenics: a splicing of the best of Ireland with the best of Europe, the lion's share of which he located in ancient Greece. The Celtic Twilight, that realm of infinite promise and deferral, provided a medium in which, for a time, Yeats was able to reconcile aspiration and actuality. But the centrifuge of Irish political discourse eventually isolated the individual strands. In "No Second Troy," his vision reemerges in distilled form, strained of its Celtic admixture. Now Greece became Ireland's spectre: a haunting by lost possibilities. Yet another two decades would elapse before Yeats had the courage to attempt a new rapprochement, a metaphysical merger of Hellas and Hibernia that would accommodate (even if it could not efface) the contradictions of his self and his world.

Notes

1. References to *Poems* refer to *The Poems of W. B. Yeats* edited by Richard J. Finneran.

2. The lines "Doomed like Odysseus and the labouring ships / And proud as Priam murdered with his peers" in the poem "The Sorrow of Love," from *The Rose,* were added in 1922 (*Poems* 40). On the other hand, the line "Troy passed away in one high funeral gleam" in another poem from the same volume ("The Rose of the World") dates from the original 1892 edition (*Poems* 36).

3. In particular, see Kiberd, Lloyd, and Ramazani, and the essays collected in Fleming.

4. According to Cullingford, these include "elliptical condensation of syntax, the replacement of parataxis by subordination, stress-packed lines, colloquial diction, consonantal rather than vocalic emphasis" (78–79).

5. Helen is credited in the poem with having burned Ilium much as if she had wielded the torch herself—an ascription of passive agency in keeping with Homer; cf. the bitter accusation of the swineherd Eumaios that Helen "cut the legs from under troops of men" (*Odyssey* 14.80–81).

6. Helen Vendler has spoken of Yeats's "Irishing" of the English sonnet ("Sonnets"); "At the Abbey Theatre," written when the poet was 47 years old, was his first Shakespearean sonnet. But even there the poem proclaims its independence, both in its subtitle—"(after Ronsard)"—and in the Irish phrase with which it begins, unintelligible and unpronounceable to the uninitiated.

7. In *On Baile's Strand,* Cuchulain refers to the Highlander Aoife's "high, laughing, turbulent head . . . / thrown backward, and the bowstring at her ear" (*Collected Plays* 258). Belphoebe, on the other hand, Spenser's costume portrait of Elizabeth, shared Diana's low regard for "base desire":

> In [her eyes] the blinded god his lustful fire
> To kindle oft assayed, but had no might,
> For with dread majesty and awful ire,
> She broke his wanton darts and quenchéd base desire.
> (2.3.23.6–9)

8. Ultimately, the image of the archer appears to go back to a vision Yeats experienced shortly before he first met Lady Gregory. While staying on Edward Martyn's estate in Galway, he visualized "a marvellous naked woman shooting an arrow at a star. She stood like a statue upon a stone pedestal" (*Memoirs* 100). Many years later, Yeats glosses this as follows: "She was, it seems, the Mother-Goddess. . . . *But she is also Artemis.*" (*Autobiography* 391; emphasis added).

9. "Upon a House Shaken by the Land Agitation" (*Poems* 95).

10. Commentators have tended to gloss "of late" as if it meant "until recently," even though its most immediate implications are of an *ongoing* activity (see for example Jeffares, *Commentary* 87 and Albright 505 note to line 2). The "erasure" here is, in biographical terms, Yeats's reconciliation with Gonne in 1908, as reflected in the title of the lyric sequence to which "No Second Troy" originally belonged: "Raymond Lully and His Wife Pernella." For a thorough discussion of these textual and biographical issues, as well as a different account of the rise of Yeats's prosodic classicism, see Holdeman 161–67.

11. Quotations taken, in turn, from *Poems* 92, Yeats qtd. in Foster 239, and *Poems* 181.

12. See "A Woman Homer Sung" (90), "The Fascination of What's Difficult" (93), and "These Are the Clouds" (96), all from Yeats's *The Green Helmet*.

13. "The Epic" tells of Everard Hall, a poem who burned his Arthurian magnum opus in 12 books because it contained nothing but "faint Homeric echoes" (Tennyson 2).

14. Cf. Vendler 21, Cullingford 78, and Ramazani 85.

15. "I only escaped from many misconceptions when, in 1897, I began an active Irish life" (*Explorations* 235). The articles Yeats wrote for the theatrical supplement *Samhain* provide a vivid chronicle of his tribulations and evolving thought during the crucial first years of the century.

16. For stylistic comparison, see Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberly,* part 3, and Eliot's "Sweeney Erect," which use a similar double-frame technique. Both were written a good decade after Yeats's poem.

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Toward a Theory of Rhetoric: Ralph Ellison, Kenneth Burke, and the Problem of Modernism

Robert Genter

In 1937 a major shift in American intellectual circles occurred with the rebirth of the literary journal *Partisan Review.* Originally founded in 1934 under the auspices of the John Reed Club of New York, a communist-inspired literary association designed to introduce writers to revolutionary art, the journal was reorganized by William Phillips and Philip Rahv, who were disenchanted with two current trends in the American literary Left: uncritical support for the Soviet Union and the promotion of proletarian literature, a form of social realism detailing the exploited condition of the American working class. The work of James Farrell, Richard Wright, and John Steinbeck had established the place of the literary Left in the working-class movement, and the League of American Writers, a branch of the United Front Against Fascism, aka the Popular Front—an antifascist coalition of socialists, communists, and liberals formed in 1935 at the behest of the seventh congress of the Communist International—acclaimed it. William Barrett, former associate editor of *Partisan Review,* describes the situation thus:

> the Communist Party and its Fellow-Travelers had brought with them a cultural doctrine of social realism and proletarian literature: art should serve the interests of the masses and be understandable to the masses. Modern writers were difficult and complex, and they dealt with rarefied states of consciousness that seemed to have no bearing upon the social struggles of the day;

> and they were therefore disparaged. Steinbeck was to be preferred to Joyce, and the populist writers of the nineteenth century to Henry James. (9)

As reorganized by Phillips and Rahv, *Partisan Review* was to serve as a rallying point both for artists frustrated by proletarian literature and for intellectuals disenchanted with Stalinist policies.[1] Inspired by the anti-Stalinist rhetoric of Leon Trotsky, who chided the Communist Party for supporting the privileged elite of Stalinist bureaucracy instead of the interests of the international working class, an increasingly large group of intellectuals and artists began to challenge the position of the Popular Front. The list included such figures as Lionel Trilling, Clement Greenberg, Dwight Macdonald, Mary McCarthy, Sidney Hook, and Delmore Schwartz. Two important events precipitated this movement. First, disillusionment with Stalinist policies gradually increased with the news of the Moscow Trials and reached its climax with the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact in 1939. The pact effectively ended the Popular Front era. Second, many artists and intellectuals were frustrated by the subordination of aesthetic practices to the imperatives of social revolution, which had reduced artistic forms such as modernism to bourgeois habit. Freed from the demands of party politics, the intellectual circles surrounding *Partisan Review* and its compatriots in journals such as *Commentary* and, later, *The New York Review of Books,* combined anticommunism with an admiration for cultural modernism.

Why modernism? I want to argue that the recuperation of modernism in the 1940s, both as social theory and aesthetic practice, served two purposes, one political and one philosophical. As historians have noted, the critique offered by modernism served politically as a refuge for intellectuals who no longer envisioned any possibility of social transformation amidst the material comfort of the postwar economy.[2] The retrenchment of liberalism at the expense of socialist aims in this period has been well documented. After the assault on labor rights in the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, the retreat from the full-employment promises of the New Deal, and the resounding defeat of the Henry Wallace campaign in 1948, the possibility of maintaining a coherent radical opposition seemed dismal.[3] Disappointed with communism and with the political leanings of the working class, postwar intellectuals retreated from their previous social engagement. It was, as Daniel Bell famously characterized it, the moment of the end of ideology in the West: "for the radical intellectual who had articulated the revolutionary impulses of the past century and a half, all this has meant an end to chiliastic hopes, to millenarianism, to apocalyptic thinking—and to ideology" (393).

Modernism also stepped into the philosophical vacuum created by the end of ideology. Modernism, of course, had always served as a corrective to the impulses of modernity and the unleashing of instrumentalism onto the world.[4] The flux and chaos of a world inherently devoid of meaning was to regain coherence through aesthetic practice. Unable to make any pointed connection with social reality, the modernist writer sought refuge in the transcendental critique offered by the language of the new artistic order, uncontaminated by the rationalizing impulses of science and technological development. Modernity's mapping and controlling of both space and time was juxtaposed to a modernist practice aimed at undermining linear time, exploring the realm of the unconscious, and participating in the ceaseless exploration of the self. The popularity of high modernist writers such as Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot and the emergence of abstract expressionism validated the movement. Cultural radicalism, then, emerged "as a transcendent critique rather than an immanent force" (Brick 12), as a platform for the estranged social critic. Modernism assumed an inherently moral stance but was unable to find any political embodiment or social agent of change. That was precisely why aesthetics became a major preoccupation of the postwar Left and why the charge of deradicalization seemed to suit them so well. In this sense, artistic revolution now took precedence over social revolution for many postwar intellectuals. Modernism carried the day.

Enter Ralph Ellison

For most literary scholars and social critics, the position of Ralph Ellison in the modernist tradition no longer remains a point of contention. His work, the argument goes, coincides with the recuperation of modernism both as social theory and aesthetic practice in the anti-Stalinist Left in America, along with the deradicalization of postwar intellectuals who were more interested in their own salvation than in social reform. The ending of Ellison's one completed novel *Invisible Man*—the moment when the unnamed protagonist retreats from the social protests in the streets to his "residence underground" (*Invisible Man* 571)—has been the general impetus for the modernist label. It has been charged that Ellison remained trapped in an aesthetic framework that prioritized the cultural project of the meritocratic artist over the practical needs of oppressed populations, that he saw "artistic transcendence [as] the one unsuppressable means through which human freedom is imagined" (Wright 185), and that he believed "social and political engagement may be antithetical to his artistic pursuit" (Watts 108). According to these interpretations, Ellison's work reclaimed the heroic subjectivity of modernism precisely at the moment when much of the American Left did so as well.

In many ways Ellison's life and career did conform to the pattern of postwar intellectuals who appropriated cultural modernism. Born in Oklahoma and educated at Tuskegee Institute, Ellison began his political and artistic education in 1935, when he decided to move to New York to escape the confines of Southern life.[5] His introduction to artistic circles in New York came when he befriended Langston Hughes. Through Hughes, Ellison eventually met Richard Wright, who asked him to contribute a short story to an edition of the journal *New Challenge.* Ellison, who had been a practicing writer and musician all his life, gladly agreed. His literary career continued when he joined the Federal Writers' Project in 1938, where he worked for the next four years. His involvement in political circles began in this period as well, with his contributions to such radical journals as *Direction, Negro Quarterly, New Masses,* and *New Challenge.* Though he did not "think too much of the so-called proletarian fiction" (qtd. in Graham and Singh 8) of the time, Ellison wrote articles in support of the Communist Party and in defense of social realism as an aesthetic form. Early in his literary career, he defended the protest fiction of authors like Richard Wright, who attempted to link the fate of black Americans with the fate of the international working class.

But Ellison was never completely committed to the political imperatives of the Communist Party. His early short stories of the 1940s, the "Buster and Riley" stories, focused on the distinctiveness of Ellison's Oklahoma background, on Southern dialect, Southern traditions, and Southern culture; and he was already attracted to modernism as a way out of the confines of social realism: "in 1935," he said, "I discovered Eliot's *The Waste Land* which moved and intrigued me but defied my powers of analysis—such as they were—and I wondered why I had never read anything of equal intensity and sensibility by an American Negro writer" (qtd. in Graham and Singh 7). As a result, he appropriated many modernist techniques in his writing, including surrealism and perspectivism. His attachment to the writings of James Joyce, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, T. S. Eliot, and Gertrude Stein coincided with the appropriation of modernism occurring in literary journals such as *Partisan Review.* Thus, *Invisible Man,* published in 1952, has been depicted as an expression of the postwar intellectual stance.

However, I want to argue that Ellison was not entirely part of the modernist tradition but, as Ross Posnock has claimed, much closer to the tradition of American pragmatism. In other words, Ellison was attempting to find a way around the problem of modernism, a way of developing a new form of cultural politics, and he appropriated the philosophical stance of pragmatism to do so. This is not to say that he was committed to the specific intellectual project of the classical pragmatists. But I will argue that like John Dewey and Kenneth Burke, he was much more interested in how art functions in the context of lived social experience than in formal aestheticism. Instead of simply acknowledging (as most scholars do) that Kenneth Burke provided the dramatic structure for Ellison's novel,[6] I want to take Ellison at his word when he said that Burke was his prime theoretical influence, and argue that his work was neither a form of existential anguish nor modernist practice but a form of pragmatism and a form of Burkean rhetoric.[7] As Ellison himself explained near the end of his life, "in college and on my own, I had studied a little psychology, a little sociology, you know, dribs and drabs, but Burke provided a *Gestalt* through which I could apply intellectual insights back into my own materials and into my own life" (qtd. in Graham and Singh 364). Read through the lens of Kenneth Burke, Ellison's aesthetic project emerges as a piece of rhetoric and a form of cultural politics. In this sense, Ellison was deliberately attempting to overcome the depoliticized character of postwar modernism without falling into the trap of social realism.

Burkean rhetoric and modern subjectivity

Burke's literary criticism, particularly in his later works and, for my purposes, especially in *Attitudes Toward History,* focused on the role of symbols in the formation of communities of discourse. The central goal of his work was the denaturalization of epistemology. Burke wanted to show that there is no foundational or transcendent point upon which to ground epistemology. The division of the social field is simply the product of a socially and culturally inherited scheme of representation, an "orientation" that prescribes "how things were, how they are, and how they may be" (*Permanence* 14). An acknowledged relationship between two objects in a social field is not a reflection of reality but an interpretation of reality, a social and linguistic construct inherited from a community of discourse. Such orientations not only provide an ontology of the social but also a motivation for action, a set of norms, values, and judgments that establish the framework for individual and group activity. They delineate which forms of experience are possible and permissible, and they provide the mode of interpretation that makes factual events sensible. Thus, for Burke, communities are formed not only through their particular structural or material pattern but also through the symbols, folklore, and heritage that bind them together. Such an "interpretive attitude" imparts a sense of relation to the larger political and social structures and establishes the boundaries between separate communities.

Of course, Burke was cognizant of the dilemma that such a theory presents: if the individual is a social product through and through, alternative frameworks are impossible. He had to find a space for individual or group agency, but without reviving modern subjectivity as the postwar intellectuals had done. To solve this dilemma he turned to rhetoric,[8] and here his project dovetailed with Ellison's work. Rhetoric, for Burke, is the means of aligning an individual with a particular discourse formation. It is a persuasive attempt to demonstrate to an individual or group that its particular orientation for categorizing the world is inadequate or, even worse, reactionary. Rhetoric, however, is neither a polemical nor a violent attempt to replace one competing orientation with another but a deliberate attempt to find specific symbolic tools that can bridge the gap between distinct linguistic paradigms, tools that work in and through the particularities of opposing orientations and demonstrate the common points of identification. Burke argued that "one casts out demons by a vocabulary of *conversion,* by an *incongruous* naming, by calling them *the very thing in all the world they are not:* old coats" (*Permanence* 133). Consequently there is no one language of persuasion, no one strategy for change, that holds priority over the rest. Following the work of George Herbert Mead, Burke maintained the distinction between the "I" and the "me" within the self. While the "me" is the object following its performative duties within a field of discourse, the "I" produces new imaginative possibilities, not from some ontologically secure point, but through new identifications with alternative discourse formations. Thus the individual is distinguishable from the social order through the ability to change rhetorical alignment.

This conception of rhetoric became the axiomatic principle of Ellison's aesthetic theory. This was perhaps most clearly demonstrated in Ellison's famous debate with Irving Howe in the pages of *Dissent* and *The New Leader* in 1963, a debate that is particularly important for my purposes because Howe spent most of his intellectual life trying to bridge the gap between the extremes of the American Left. Unlike most of the other New York intellectuals, whose anti-Stalinism contributed to their drift into conservative politics, Howe remained a staunch defender of the project of socialism in America. But he simultaneously continued to defend cultural modernism against the degrading tendencies of mass culture. In a pointed and polemical attack on the work of Ellison and James Baldwin, Howe defended the "protest fiction" of Richard Wright against Baldwin's claim that Wright had conflated literature and sociology and in doing so had denied black Americans of any complexity, humanity, or agency. For Howe, it was impossible for a black writer to escape his particular condition, since "the 'sociology' of his existence formed a constant pressure on his literary work, and not merely in the way this might be true for any writer, but with a pain and ferocity that nothing could remove" (354). Howe dissented from the "implausible assertion of unconditioned freedom" (363) that he felt characterized the work of both Baldwin and Ellison. The evasion of social struggle and the focused emphasis on individual salvation were, for Howe, inadequate political and literary tools.

Critics have generally viewed Ellison's defense of Baldwin and his critique of Howe as a prime example of his cultural elitism, his bourgeois liberalism, or even his apolitical modernist sensibility.[9] According to this interpretation Howe is the sympathetic victor, a defender of political praxis in the face of aesthetic acquiescence. Critics have generally followed Howe's framework for the debate: the committed Marxist critic (Howe) versus the follower of a reactionary modernist aesthetic (Ellison). But if we acknowledge that Ellison was not committed to modernism, then we can begin to see how he framed the debate: as a discussion on the appropriate form of rhetorical strategy and the role of literature in the social struggle—and as a call for a cultural politics that go beyond Howe's project.

The key point in the debate was the discussion on Wright's character Bigger Thomas, the antihero of the 1940 novel *Native Son,* who under the constraints of his social condition commits a violent crime. Howe took Bigger as a metaphor for the condition of black Americans, simultaneously "a blow at the white man" that "forced him to recognize himself as an oppressor" and "a blow at the black man" that "forced him to recognize the cost of his submission" (355). Through the revelation of the pain of social experience, the black writer, Howe argued, gives form to the "'sociology' of his existence," and the rhetorical force of Wright's novel stems from the shock and horror given "the decent and cultivated white men" who assumedly are ignorant of their own culpability for the life of Bigger Thomas. Ellison's inability to recognize the actual presence of Bigger Thomas in the world, according to Howe, stemmed from his commitment to prove that he had transcended his own social background. Ellison did not respond to this charge, not because he felt himself guilty, but because he was changing the framework of the debate. As Ellison wrote to Howe, his goal "was not to strike the stance of the 'free artist' against the 'ideological critic'" ("World" 125). Howe focused on Bigger Thomas as a metaphor for existing social conditions; Ellison focused on Bigger as a form of rhetorical strategy. That was precisely why the two debaters appeared to talk past each other and why Ellison declared that he was "sorry Irving Howe got the impression that I was throwing beanballs when I only meant to pitch him a hyperbole" ("World" 120).

In fact, what Ellison was asking was whether Bigger Thomas possesses any rhetorical value as a symbolic representation of the conditions of black Americans, not whether Bigger actually exists. Placed within the field of the social, does Bigger fundamentally challenge the language or the vocabulary in which distinct groups discuss the problem of race? At an existential level Bigger serves as an appropriate recognition of the despair felt in most settings of the black community. Ellison (despite the pronouncements of many of his critics) was always attuned to political and economic oppression in the United States. As he repeatedly made clear in both the novel and his critical essays, "overcrowded and exploited politically and economically, Harlem is the scene and symbol of the Negro's perpetual alienation in the land of his birth" ("Harlem" 296). He agreed that Bigger represents the social product of that alienation, but argued that at a symbolic level, Bigger has an unfortunately reactionary effect. Inherently unsympathetic to black readers who see none of their own humanity or agency in Wright's novel, and reassuring to white liberal readers whose visions of black life it reaffirms, the symbol of Bigger encourages no real dialogue or exchange. This, for Ellison, is the basic failing of Wright's novel: in it, "the basic unity of human experience that assures us of some possibility of empathic and symbolic identification with those of other backgrounds is blasted in the interest of specious political and philosophical conceits" ("World" 123). The problem for Ellison is to find symbolic tools that can bridge the gap between distinct social groups or communities and work in and through the particularities of race and class without transcending them.

The symbol of Bigger Thomas serves no such rhetorical value, Ellison maintained. Bigger does not connect the fate of American society to the fate of black Americans on any real symbolic level. Regardless of the difficulty of such a project, Ellison saw no other use for aesthetics. He recognized that there was no one audience reading his work but a plurality of readers, each with separate motivations, cultural biases, and discourses of representation. Rhetoric, for Ellison, does not consist of replacing one ontological scheme with another, one version of reality with another, or one paradigm with another, but of finding a way to shift the points of identification within a discourse through its own logic. This means engaging with the particularities of black culture, that "'concord of sensibilities' which the group expresses through historical circumstance and through which it has come to constitute a subdivision of the larger American culture" ("World" 131). In Ellison's novel, his protagonist's indictment against Brother Tobitt for his unwillingness to consider the particularities of black life in Harlem when developing the Brotherhood's political program stands as a strong defense of Burkean rhetoric: "ask your wife to take you around to the gin mills and the barber shops and the juke joints and the churches, Brother. Yes, and the beauty parlors on Saturdays when they're frying hair. A whole unrecorded history is spoken then, Brother" (*Invisible Man* 471).

According to Ellison, Howe never recognized that Bigger might in fact possess a reactionary value. To maintain Bigger as a symbolic presence, no matter how unconscious, was to exert a form of rhetoric. That is why Ellison was quick to argue that what Howe took as "descriptive" statements about the social experience of black Americans are in fact "prescriptive" ones, symbolic actions that contain implicit representational force. No matter how fictitious, such statements become real through their invocation: "prefabricated Negroes are sketched on sheets of paper and superimposed upon the Negro community; then when someone thrusts his head through the page and yells, 'Watch out Jack, there're people living under here,' they are shocked and indignant" ("World" 123). The result of such prescriptive statements is what Burke termed the "bureaucratization of the imagination," the imposition of one interpretive framework at the expense of all others and its embeddedness "in the realities of a social texture, in all the complexity of language and habits" (*Attitudes* 225). Injected into the field of the social, Bigger blocks out other possible symbolic actions. Thus Ellison asked in disbelief, "are we to believe that [Howe] simply does not recognize rhetoric when he practices it?" ("World" 129).

The politics of rhetoric in *Invisible Man*

Ellison appropriated one of the central tenets of modernism—that language is not a transparent medium of expression but a charged way of ordering the field of objects—and invested himself in the language and psychology of his readers. Whereas modernism was concerned with developing its own linguistic system to provide a unity of immediate experience amidst, as T. S. Eliot claimed, "A heap of broken images" (53), Ellison was preoccupied with entering a particular community of discourse, a "cultural heritage," and examining its implications and contradictions. Ellison's novel is the effect of such an examination. It is an implicit attempt to enter into the language of modernism and open it onto the social field. His tale of one black man's journey from a Southern town to a Northern metropolis, from blind acceptance to personal outrage, and from purpose to perspective, is a classic modernist work. But the narrative is buttressed by a prologue and epilogue, which are explicit attempts to critique the language of modernism. Ellison's hero travels from being a student at a Southern college to a worker in a Northern industry to an orator for a radical socialist organization, and realizes that in each setting his identity and sense of self are provided for him, part of the scheme of representation found in each organization. Invisible Man's identity is subsumed under the paternal arrogance of Mr. Norton and under the scientific language of the Brotherhood. Invisible Man's story ends precisely where high modernism does, with the individual hero finding an isolated, ontologically secure point outside the flux and chaos of social reality in the self-imposed hibernation of his "residence underground."

The epilogue is an interrogation of that position, of what modernism neglects and what purposes it serves. Retreating from social engagement after having learned that "reality is as irresistible as a club" (572) and therefore wanting to get "away from it all" (573), Invisible Man seeks solitude in his own personal domain. He makes the connection to modernism by asking whether his seclusion has placed him "in the rear or in the *avant-garde"* (573). This unanswered question symbolizes the protagonist's unwillingness to remain in his underground residence as a solution to his social invisibility. Contemplative and alone, Invisible Man continuously asks "what *is* the next phase?" (576). Thus the epilogue becomes a critique of existentialist heroism and the attempt to escape to an ontological point "beyond the world." The pragmatism of Burke always stresses the social embeddedness of the individual, maintaining that despite the "unique combination of experiences" that comprise the individual, there are always "symbolic bridges" that connect the individual to the "social pattern" (*Attitudes* 289). This is precisely why Ellison's Invisible Man becomes so disturbed by his self-imposed hibernation, or what Burke termed the modernist retreat to "the realm of the uncrowned king" (*Attitudes* 289).

While Invisible Man is able to more or less remove himself bodily from the world, he is unable to escape the social "frame of acceptance" that he uses to order his experience, and thus he cannot remove himself from social reality. Consequently, his continuing refrain in the epilogue is that "in going underground, I whipped it all except the mind, the *mind"* (580). The reason, as Burke maintained, is that "the mind, being formed by language, is formed by a *public grammar"* (*Attitudes* 341). Unable to live without a coherent social frame of acceptance (or at least engaging in social contestation to challenge existing frames), Invisible Man envisions his return to the outside world after his manuscript is complete: "here I've set out to throw my anger in the world's face, but now that I've tried to put it all down the old fascination with playing a role returns, and I'm drawn upward again" (579). Recognizing that subjectivity is inherently connected to a particular social and cultural formation, the protagonist knows he must return, arguing that "to lose a sense of *where* you are implies the danger of losing a sense of *who* you are" (577).

In this sense, it is ironic that historians and literary theorists like

George Cotkin and Jerry Watts continue to depict Ellison as an existentialist and critique him on such grounds by wishing he had been "exposed to a more culturally enriched Marxism (such as that of Antonio Gramsci)" (Watts 54). The irony is that Ellison received his intellectual inspiration from Kenneth Burke, whose body of work has been recognized as the first pre-Gramscian theory of cultural hegemony produced in America.[10] It is even odder, then, that scholars continue to attribute Ellison's theory of the blues to his reading of French existentialism when in fact what he calls the "near-tragic, near-comic lyricism" ("Richard Wright's Blues" 78) of the blues has more in common with Burke's pragmatism than with either Malraux's or Sartre's existentialism. Ellison invoked existentialism mostly because it was the popular philosophical discourse of this period. Many other intellectuals and writers, including Norman Mailer, William Barrett, and Herbert Marcuse, also appropriated existentialist motifs without actually defining themselves as existentialists. The vocabulary of French existentialism was the common language available to Leftist intellectuals interested in overcoming the limitations of Old Left politics and Marxist idioms.

But Ellison was quick to dissociate himself from what he saw as the stultifying existentialism of Sartre. History for Sartre allows the individual to transcend his or her bodily presence and become a being-beyond-the-world. The dualism between mind and body and between the subject and its surrounding field of objects becomes an ontological given. Mind is emphasized over body, and the subject over its field of objects, providing the ground for individual freedom. The existentialist aspects of Ellison's novel were derived from the work of André Malraux, not the early philosophy of Sartre. Malraux differed from Sartre in not being preoccupied with the reclamation of modern subjectivity.[11] Whereas Sartre saw meaning as a product of individual invention, Malraux always recognized the social embodiment of individual freedom. In other words, Malraux refused to make the either/or distinction between individual freedom and group identity. Transcendence of the human condition for Malraux exists in human relations, in bonds of love and solidarity. The free-floating subjectivity of Sartre's existentialism is an impossibility for Malraux.

That is why Ellison's work is littered with vocabularies from separate discourses. His famous appropriation of black folklore and language, from the veterans at the Golden Day to Trueblood's poetic description of his moral transgression to the invocation of blues references throughout the text, is an attempt to recognize the language in which certain segments of the black community discussed racial oppression. Readers who identify with this language find it placed among competing ways of representing the situation of black Americans, such as the bourgeois liberalism of Mr. Bledsoe, the scientific Marxism of Brother Tarp, and the black nationalism of Ras the Destroyer. By moving among these various representations, Ellison gains a new vantage point from which to critique them, so that the novel serves as a form of what Burke called "casuistic stretching," the attempt "to 'coach' the transference of words from one category of associations to another" (*Attitudes* 230)—from the language of the reader to the language of Invisible Man. By distancing himself from the conceptual categories available to his readers and therefore unveiling the chaos existing outside "the narrow borders of what men call reality" (*Invisible Man* 576), Ellison attempts to create a new scheme of orientation. As Invisible Man informs his readers, he is trying "to give pattern to the chaos which lives within the pattern of your certainties" (580). This is Burkean rhetoric at its strongest, a way of shifting back and forth between competing languages or representational fields and finding points of common contact and points of definite disagreement. By denaturalizing the conceptual apparatus of his readers, Invisible Man relates his own experience of centerlessness to the condition of all his readers. The impact of the last sentence stems from the revelation of his rhetorical strategy—"Who knows but that, on the lower frequencies, I speak for you?" (581). The effect is to conjoin the fate of the readers (the outcasts, the uncommitted, and the convinced) with the fate of the narrator.

From this point of view, the proper way to understand Ellison's invocation of the blues is to recognize its relationship with his rhetorical project. Unfortunately, this has been hampered by critics' attempt to equate Ellison's invocation of the blues with his reading of French existentialism. For instance, Cotkin argues that Ellison's work is a "blues novel about the existential dilemma" that promotes "a form of existentialist heroism where the individual, rather than the race or class, became, albeit with certain limitations, the lonely possessor of responsibility for his fate" (37). As already noted, Ellison never fully committed himself to existentialism but was primarily attracted to its focus on human agency. But to equate the blues with existentialism (and by implication with a form of individualism) is to miss the social character of the blues. In fact, Ellison derived his blues idiom from the meliorist attitude implicit in American pragmatism, particularly the work of William James and Kenneth Burke. Ellison's characterization of the blues as a "near-tragic, near-comic lyricism" was an implicit critique of existentialism and a direct attempt at aligning pragmatism with the cultural tradition of the blues.

Ellison's idiom directly parallels the conceptual framework Burke constructed in his 1937 *Attitudes Toward History*. In this work, Burke demonstrates that all frames of orientation that divide up the social field fall into two separate categories, tragedy and comedy. The tragic frame of acceptance is based on a sense of personal futility, a sense that the terror of social circumstance is too overwhelming and inevitably fatal. Such an attitude is a way of acknowledging moments of deep social change while simultaneously rejecting the shift in social values that change produces. The social shift is then imbued "with the connotations of crime" (39), and tragedy becomes a polemical attack on the point of transition through reference to the prior historical moment in which the crime was perpetrated. The individual, according to Burke, falls into the role of spectator, a passive recipient of historical flux who resigns himself to "a sense of his limitations" (38). The result is withdrawal from the new social order to an assumed ontological point outside the vicissitudes of time, whether in the realm of art or in images of social reality prior to the tragic crime.

A comedic frame of acceptance, on the other hand, is unwilling to accept the denial of human agency implicit in tragedy. The comic perspective becomes an explicit attempt to treat the individual as both a spectator of and an active agent in historical change. The characteristic attitude is not resignation but embarrassment—a willingness to acknowledge that a crime has occurred but an unwillingness to attribute responsibility to a villainous figure or material circumstance. The comic figure emerges from the darkness of tragedy and accepts responsibility for his or her own agency. But as Burke argued,

> when you add that people are *necessarily* mistaken, that *all* people are exposed to situations in which they must act as fools, that *every* insight contains its own special kind of blindness, you complete the comic circle, returning again to the lesson of humility that underlies great tragedy. (*Attitudes* 41)

In this, the magnitude of the situation is leveled through the recognition that no individual has exclusive insight into the workings of history. Instead, the comic figure accepts such moments of change through humility but without the resignation associated with tragedy and with the corresponding sense of complete limitations.

The comic figure emerges in Ellison's novel as the "blues-toned laugher-at-wounds who included himself in his indictment of the human condition" (xviii). As Ellison writes elsewhere, in words reminiscent of Burke, "the blues speak to us simultaneously of the tragic and the comic aspects of the human condition and they express a profound sense of life shared by many Negro Americans precisely because their lives have combined these modes" ("Blues" 256). Thus, the blues serve as "a comic antidote to the ailments of politics" ("Blues" 257), as an implicit recognition that the American political system has failed in its promise to the black community, and as an affirmation of the perseverance needed to challenge and alter social fate. The downtrodden figures in Ellison's novel, the unexpected heroes and comic masters like Trueblood and Invisible Man's grandfather, are purveyors of the blues. The veteran that the protagonist encounters at the Golden Day and aboard the bus to Washington, D.C., directly imparts the spirit of the blues. Instead of the demoralization connected with tragedy, the veteran offers comic wisdom:

> Come out of the fog, young man. And remember you don't have to be a complete fool in order to succeed. Play the game, but don't believe in it—that much you owe yourself. Even if it lands you in a strait jacket or a padded cell. Play the game, but play it your own way—part of the time at least. Play the game, but raise the ante, my boy. Learn how it operates, learn how *you* operate—I wish I had time to tell you only a fragment. (153–54)

The veteran is offering rhetoric as a political weapon. By mastering the dominant mode of orientation (its field of objects, the arrangements of those objects, and the meaning assigned to that arrangement), the comic operator is in a position to riff on that arrangement. As Albert Murray notes, the blues

> is a statement about confronting the complexities inherent in the human situation and about improvising or experimenting or

> riffing or otherwise playing with (or even gambling with) such possibilities as are also inherent in the obstacles, the disjunctures, and the jeopardy. (25)

Willing to risk both embarrassment and implication in the structure of social reality, the comic blues master gains a framework for subversion.

Perhaps the best example in the novel of Ellison's prioritization of comedy over tragedy as a frame of acceptance is the bar scene at the Golden Day, an implicit reference to Lewis Mumford's 1926 work of the same name.[12] Mumford's book is a deliberate attempt at reconstructing recent American history as a form of tragedy. Mumford promoted the literature of the early nineteenth century, including Melville, Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, above what he saw as the instrumental vision of later literary traditions. For Mumford, the philosophical idealism posited in the works of these authors is a proper remedy for the failings of American development.[13] They were the first American writers to explicitly deal with the contradictions inherent in the project of modernity. America's protracted break with the Old World and the attempt to ground its institutions and social structures on something other than the inherited customs of European traditions were part of the difficult task of the Enlightenment's replacement of transcendental groundings for truth with self-grounding. For Mumford, "the groups that had most completely shaken off the old symbolisms were those that were most ready for the American adventure: they turned themselves easily to the mastery of the external environment" (30).

The pioneer, the emblematic figure in Mumford's usable past, was the figure who, in breaking with the cultural patterns of the Old World and turning instead to Protestantism and science, introduced instrumentalism to American thought. The eradication of transcendental foundations for truth and their replacement by the use of reason resulted in the demystification and objectification of the natural world. The collapse of "the symbols of the older culture" and the unleashing of the pioneer onto the American wilderness, "innocent of anything to occupy his mind except the notion of controlling matter and mastering the external world" (41), marked the unleashing of instrumentalism, the dominant theme of American thought. This led to the emergence of an American philosophy that preached acquiescence and produced paralysis, the philosophy of pragmatism. Thus, American history became tragic; the culture had no determinant symbols to hold onto and no inspired visions to redress the valuelessness of modernity.

Emerson's transcendentalism became the touchstone for the respiritualization of American culture that Mumford sought. Unwilling to yield to the impulses of pure experience, Emerson saw a universal spirit that would serve as a foundation for individual behavior and salvation. Having recognized that America had disposed of the cultural symbolism of the prior age, Emerson sought a new symbolism, one that would imbue the new social institutions with value and meaning. Nature provided that symbolism—it was not simply a resource for instrumental uses but a site for satisfying the inner demands of human existence. According to Mumford,

> with most of the resources of the past at his command, Emerson achieved nakedness: his central doctrine is the virtue of this intellectual, or cultural, nakedness: the virtue of getting beyond the institution, the habit, the ritual, and finding out what it means afresh in one's own consciousness. (96)

Emerson saw subjectivity as detached from externality and inherently connected with the transcendent, the source of inspiration and salvation.

By invoking Mumford's reading of Emerson, Ellison attempts to show the failings of transcendentalism. The main representation of Emerson in the novel—Mr. Norton's invocation of Emerson's work—elaborates this critique of Mumford's romanticism. (So does Mr. Emerson, Invisible Man's prospective employer.) Mr. Norton, the college donor and "symbol of the Great Traditions" (37), embodies Mumford's Emerson. His sense of self is connected with his duties as a philanthropist. As he repeatedly declares to Invisible Man, "I had a feeling that your people were somehow connected with my destiny" (41). His subjectivity, he thinks, is therefore able to overcome the limitations of his individual circumstances through the fate of the groups he has helped: "through you and your fellow students I become, let us say, three hundred teachers, seven hundred trained mechanics, eight hundred skilled farmers, and so on" (45). Like the college founder before him who "had the power of a king, or in a sense, of a god" (45), Norton believes he has transcended his own particular experience. He is *in* the world of objects but is not *of* it. His identity is part and parcel of objects he can control, but he is not forced to recognize their particularities. As the protagonist notes, Mr. Norton does not "even know [his] name" (45).

Ellison recognized that the transcendental self of Mumford's Emersonian romanticism requires the presence of an other to provide its stability. The transcendental self grounds itself not on the objects of its experience but on the way in which those objects serve as vehicles to a truth grounded outside of experience. The particularity of those everyday objects drops out. Thus, the self's dominance of the other is the precondition of its own appearance and realization. Its presence depends on a negation, the ability to control and dominate the other. The veteran in the Golden Day reveals precisely this to Mr. Norton: "to you [Invisible Man] is a mark on the scorecard of your achievement, a thing and not a man; a child, or even less—a black amorphous thing" (95).

Mumford's image of the Golden Day therefore ignores the way the transcendental self is founded on the subjugation of black Americans. That is what shocks Mr. Norton when he enters the Golden Day. To fall into the Golden Day is for Mr. Norton to fall into the world of externality. It is to fall into time. Ellison's representation of Mumford's Emerson serves as an implicit critique of his transcendental self and, as a result, an implicit argument for the social self elaborated by pragmatism. This is why Ellison was able to conjoin the situation of oppressed black Americans and the intellectual tradition of American pragmatism. Both were attempting to escape the confines of transcendentalism, "that great false wisdom [that] taught slaves and pragmatists alike, that white is right" (95). Operating beneath the romantic radicalism offered by Mumford is the forgotten world of the Golden Day and the chaos of social experience.

Of course Ellison recognized the dangers of detaching subjectivity from its transcendental foundations. To place the self within the flux of experience is to risk the collapse of all positive significations of identity. The character of Rinehart represents this very problem. Prefiguring both the hipster of beat literature and the centerless self of postmodern writings, Rinehart embodies one of the continuing themes of postwar literature—the collapse of stable foundations for subjectivity. As Mr. Emerson's secretary and son proclaims, "who has any identity anyway?" (187). The Cold War period's version of socialization not only destabilized the autonomy of the modernist text but also threatened to dissolve modern subjectivity. Rinehart represents the radical possibilities inherent in that dissolution. To constantly shuffle between categories of identification is to accept a world without boundaries, a world where the reification of one particular identity is social death, a world that has jettisoned any remnants of the past. It is "a vast seething, hot world of fluidity, and Rine the rascal was at home" (498). Rinehart is the centerless self, a conglomeration of separate categories: "Rine the runner and Rine the gambler and Rine the briber and Rine the lover and Rine the Reverend" (498). His appearance near the end of the protagonist's search for his own identity marks Ellison's attempt to reconstruct the self at the moment of its dissolution, the hope "that somewhere between Rinehart and invisibility there were great potentialities" (510). Rinehart as the "personification of chaos" (qtd. in Graham and Singh 18) provides no reference point, no way of understanding whether or not a particular identity is liberating or not. Unable to posit any positive values of his own, Rinehart partakes of no tradition or cultural heritage.

In this sense, Ellison wanted to reconstruct the self in the face of the chaos that he himself had revealed through his deconstruction of both liberalism and communism. His protagonist leaps into that chaos by burning emblems of his previous identities, including his high school diploma and Tod Clifton's Sambo doll. But jettisoning his past does not lead to liberation, and hope is not found in "the freedom of Rinehart or the power of a Jack, nor simply the freedom not to run" (575). Since the self, for Ellison, is the product of the frames of reference with which it is aligned, a change in the nature of subjectivity can occur only when the individual recognizes the social construction of those frames of reference. According to Burke, "the change of identity (whereby [one] is at once the same man and a new man) gives him a greater complexity of coordinates. He 'sees around the corner.' He is 'prophetic,' endowed with 'perspective'" (*Attitudes* 210). In words reminiscent of Burke's, Invisible Man describes his own personal transformation thus:

> and now all the past humiliations became precious parts of my experience, and for the first time, leaning against that stone wall in the sweltering night, I began to accept my past and, as I accepted it, I felt memories welling up within me. It was as though I'd learned suddenly to look around corners; images of past humiliations flickered through my head and I saw that they were more than separate experiences. They were me; they defined me. (507–08)

Subjectivity is a development that occurs in and through historical time, not above and beyond it in the realm of the absolute or the teleological.

That is why Ellison was so attuned to the cultural images of black experience that were bandied about. While presentations of black pathology might shed some light on social and economic oppression in America, they did not help support positive definitions of black life. They did not, according to Ellison, help "to explore the full range of American Negro humanity and to affirm those qualities which are of value beyond any question of segregation, economics or previous condition of servitude" ("Same Pain" 17). Thus, the affirmation of selfhood is a dialogical operation. It begins with an acceptance of cultural heritage, when an individual starts

> to recognize himself through where he comes from, recognizing his parents and his inherited values. This is a very active, self-creating process. The way to create a false identity is to think that you can ignore what went before.
> (qtd. in Graham and Singh 232)

But it also entails emergence from the darkness of invisibility to the light of visibility, and this entails positive recognition from social and cultural institutions as a whole. This is why Ellison always claimed that the cultural project of America is both a black and white creation. According to Ellison,

> to embrace uncritically values which are extended to us by others is to reject the validity, even the sacredness, of our own experience. It is also to forget that the small share of reality which each of our diverse groups is able to snatch from the whirling chaos of history belongs not to the group alone, but to all of us.
> ("Hidden Name" 166)

This recognition of a common cultural heritage is a recognition of pluralism, "the puzzle of the one-and-the-many" ("Hidden Name" 165) that characterizes the American project. The struggle for political participation is just the beginning of a larger cultural project. The respect granted through the legal recognition of full citizenship must eventually translate into esteem for the unique contributions of an individual or group to the entire community.[14] The problem of race in America, according to Ellison, goes "beyond its economic and narrowly political aspects" ("American Dilemma" 310) as defined by the radical Left. What is needed is

> not an exchange of pathologies, but a change of the basis of society. This is a job which both Negroes and whites must perform together. In Negro culture there is much of value for America as a whole. What is needed are Negroes to take it and create of it "the uncreated consciousness of their race." In doing so they will do far more, they'll help create a more human American. ("American Dilemma" 317)

This involves American society living up to the promises made at its founding. Reflecting on the words of his grandfather, Invisible Man iterates Ellison's political project in claiming that "we were to affirm the principle on which the country was built and not the men, or at least not the men who did the violence" (574). Thus the ultimate joke in affirming that principle is that "we are *part of them* as well as apart from them and subject to die when they die" (575). It means the acceptance of a common humanity and a common political faith amidst cultural, racial, and ethnic differences.

This affirmation of difference in Ellison's project is also an affirmation of the intersubjective character of the self—"the interpenetration of human instinct with environment, through the process called experience" ("Richard Wright's Blues" 87)—that leads to more emancipatory and cooperative forms of identity. As Invisible Man remarks at the end of his travels, "one of the greatest jokes in the world is the spectacle of the whites busy escaping blackness and becoming blacker every day, and the blacks striving toward whiteness, becoming quite dull and gray" (577). Recognizing the intersubjective nature of selfhood means refusing to lapse into claims about innocence and purity. It also means entering the field of rhetoric and recognizing that social transformation occurs not only in the realities of politics but also in the field of the social, that ambiguous space between the political world and private life where cultural patterns, meanings, and symbols are exchanged and debated. Thus, for Ellison, the novel "is *always* a public gesture, though not necessarily a political one" ("World" 110).

Notes

1. See Guilbaut ch. 1 and Wald 368.

2. See, for example, Brick 12–13.

3. See Brinkley 265–271.

4. My understanding of modernism is derived from Berman, Harper, Jay, Miller, Quinones, Ross, and Wilde.

5. For details of Ellison's life, see O'Meally.

6. See, for example, O'Meally ch. 1.

7. On the connection between Burke and Ellison, see Parrish 110 and Albrecht.

8. On Burkean rhetoric, see Biesecker; Lentricchia; Livingston, "The Politics of Pragmatism"; and Rueckert.

9. For example, Jerry Watts claims that "Ellison, ever the individualist, sidesteps the crux of Howe's question to assert that the individual writer achieves personal realization as a writer only through his or her individual mastery of written forms" (72). See also Cotkin.

10. See Biesecker 5–6 and Lentricchia 74–79.

11. See Harris 108–09 and Tenenbaum 149–50.

12. On the connection between Ellison and Mumford, see Nadel 86–124.

13. My reading of Mumford is taken from Livingston's *Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Cultural Revolution* ch. 9.

14. On the contemporary politics of recognition, see Honneth ch. 9.

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Catholicism, Character, and the Invention of the Liberal Novel Tradition

Marina MacKay

One issue that preoccupied novelists in the decades after the Second World War was how to reconcile their inherited idea of the self with the transcendent moral problems raised by the recent history of human atrocity. Iris Murdoch considered it "curious that modern literature, which is so much concerned with violence, contains so few convincing pictures of evil" (30):

> We no longer see man against a background of values, of realities, which transcend him. We picture man as a brave naked will surrounded by an easily comprehended empirical world. For the hard idea of truth we have substituted a facile idea of sincerity. (26)

Although it was surprising to find such an uncompromising attack on "sincerity" in the writing of a novelist known for her interests in existentialism—one of Murdoch's earliest books was a short monograph on Sartre—we find a comparable attack on liberal dogma in the work of the card-carrying liberal humanist Angus Wilson. Wilson too, in the liberated 1960s, complained that English fiction was "too much concerned with right and wrong, and not enough with evil" ("Evil" 3). For Wilson, the English novel had rejected the metaphysical and used socially acceptable behavior ("right and wrong") as its only moral benchmark. He predictably came under attack from his fellow humanists, who felt that a Grand Old Man of English Letters was letting the side down. Ironically, these criticisms often lapse into the diffuse moral relativism that Wilson argued was so detrimental to the novel. For example, John Oakland argued that

> It is critically unfortunate that Wilson considers that personal and social versions of right and wrong in literature cannot convey a sense of overpowering values, and perhaps the question of evil is still one of definition, belief and personal evaluation, rather than a prescriptive judgement applied to all writing. (27)

This critic's moderate sense of evil as a matter of "definition, belief and personal evaluation" is not simply liberal-agnostic, but an implicitly Protestant validation of individual judgment. Agnostic novelists who made declarations of moral belief that suggested the limitations of the values of individualism, introspection, and social responsibility were immediately objects of suspicion because they exposed the assumption, wholly unexamined in our time, on which the English critical tradition rests: that the novel is a Protestant form. In this essay I sketch a history of this assumption, illustrating the earlier background of propaganda and counterpropaganda that characterized attempts to define the Englishness of English literature.

At the earlier stages of institutional literary study, anti-Catholicism was never an issue because the ideas of formal unity and complexity that characterized New Critical approaches to poetry were always best illustrated by the short lyric poems of the English Renaissance, which was only uneasily Protestant. However, the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* association of the novel with the Reformation, made most influentially in Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel*, meant that the idea of the novel's essential Protestantism went unchallenged. The parochialism of this association was stunning, of course, denying as it did the primacy of the Spanish, Catholic *Don Quixote* in the inception of the novel, and denying, furthermore, that Catholic Europe contributed to the subsequent development of the form. But the obvious difficulty of applying formal criteria to the historically expansive English novel meant that the novel quickly became subject to alternative scrutiny. When the Leavises made the novel respectable for academic study, the Protestant virtue of "moral insight" (introspection, individualism) became to the novel what formal intricacy was to poetry. Whereas "practical criticism" was predicated on the idea that poetry could, and should, transcend its social contexts, academic criticism in Britain asked the novel to perform a more transparent and manageable social function.

It has often been noted that the Leavisite agenda was to extend to English literature the prestige that had hitherto been the preserve of the classical tradition. As Geoffrey Hartman summarizes it, "F. R. Leavis's emphasis on the greatness of the native tradition, of vernacular literature, sought to replace the mystique still surrounding the Classics" (285). However, the opposition is more than antique versus modern, or Latin and Greek versus vernacular. Geographical in addition to historical oppositions are posited: home versus abroad and England versus Europe. Q. D. Leavis rejoiced in the supremacy of the English novel over the products of the Catholic nations. In "The Englishness of the English Novel," she declared that "the glories of English literature are innately Protestant in character" and that "the English novel owes more than anything else to the fact that it has traditionally been the product of an essentially Protestant culture" (318). What this meant in literary terms for the narrowing of the canon was the privileging of realism over romance: the replication of a *heimlich* social reality that, through its familiarity, perpetuates the illusion of the natural.

That Leavis's taste was for realism is apparent in her account of what she perceived to be the English novel's nineteenth-century golden age:

> The traditional English life of the countryside, one of great house, parsonage, chapel, schoolhouse, farm and cottage united in a local culture and centring economically on the market-town and spiritually on the cathedral close, made for mutual knowledge and accommodation. (321)

According to this liberal orthodoxy, "knowledge" is to be privileged over mystery and "accommodation" over principle; this is a model of spiritual and social compromise. The English novel at its best, she appears to be arguing, is a product of a closed and orderly world, replicating and endorsing this world in fiction rather than imagining realities that might transcend the empirically knowable. Leavis's preindustrial idyll reveals much about the values of the English tradition: nostalgic, country-worshipping, and socially reactionary (the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate). The model of society is essentially conservative, whereby every subject knows his or her place and remains there in the interests of great literature. After all, she notes, "how naturally it came to the English to write from their roots" (322). Angus Wilson too believed that roots were central to the tradition, but he argued that the conservative emphasis on rootedness made the English novel a blinkered and provincial affair:

> There is too much concern with defence and not enough with expansion of horizons. There is a belief that even the great wanderers must find roots somewhere. Anything not rooted is lost. Evil and good cannot transcend any kind of place or rootedness in society. There is a defensive smugness that comes out of this, a note of provincialism, often of chauvinism. Even a sort of race prejudice emerges. ("Evil" 12)

Where evil occurs in the English novel, it is located on the continent, in dirty old abroad, in the gothic novel.

The association of the gothic (low culture) with the continent and the concomitant association of realism (high culture) with Englishness chime in with prejudices that have an impressive lineage. It seems extraordinary that Q. D. Leavis should have articulated these sentiments as late as 1980, but it's not surprising that she should have articulated them at all: anti-Catholicism is a feature of some of the most celebrated works of English fiction. A century and a half before Leavis, Charlotte Brontë had juxtaposed English empiricism and Catholic superstition in *Villette*, much to the advantage of the English. When Lucy Snowe unburdens herself to a priest, her "grateful recollection" (162) of his kindness fights against her perverse frisson of moral danger:

> Did I, do you suppose, reader, contemplate venturing again within that worthy priest's reach? As soon should I have thought of walking into a Babylonish furnace. That priest had arms which could influence me; he was naturally kind, with a sentimental French kindness, to whose softness I knew myself not wholly impervious. Without respecting some sorts of affection, there was hardly any sort, having a fibre of root in reality, which I could rely on my force wholly to withstand. Had I gone to him, he would have shown me all that was tender, and comforting, and gentle, in the honest popish superstition. Then he would have tried to kindle, blow and stir up in me the zeal of good works. I know not how it would all have ended. We all think ourselves strong in some points; we all know ourselves weak in

> many; the probabilities are that had I visited Numéro 3, Rue des Mages, at the hour and day appointed, I might just now, instead of writing this heretic narrative, be counting my beads in the cell of a certain Carmelite convent on the Boulevard of Crécy in Villette. (162–63)

Lucy will not walk into the "Babylonish furnace" of dangerously seductive kindness. The priest occupies the Street of the Magi; he is associated with occult wisdom and is well placed to exploit her moment of weakness. The location of the convent is ironic because Crécy was the site of a famous English victory in the fourteenth century, and Lucy's resistance is a victory over "sentimental French kindness" at best and "popish superstition" at worst. Most significantly of all, her novel, any novel, is a "heretic narrative." Lucy has been true to both her national identity and her narrative destiny (or vocation, you could say) by resisting the meretricious kindness of a repressive and foreign religion, associated throughout the novel with surveillance, deception, and fake spectral apparitions.

If Catholic culture is treated sensationally in *Villette*, it is more explicitly related to sensation fiction earlier, in *Northanger Abbey*, a novel that, like *Villette*, foregrounds the skeptical, rational English character. The impeccable Protestant roots of the hero, Henry Tilney, are early established when Catherine Morland imagines the abbey's history: "a richly-endowed convent at the time of the Reformation [. . .] fallen into the hands of an ancestor of the Tilneys on its dissolution" (150). Famously led astray by the Romish superstitions of the gothic novel, Catherine has her fancies of a clandestine murder curtailed by Tilney's comically pedestrian good sense:

> If I understand you rightly, you had formed a surmise of such horror as I have hardly words to—Dear Miss Morland, consider the dreadful nature of the suspicions you have entertained. What have you been judging from? Remember that we are English: that we are Christians. Consult your own understanding, your own sense of the probable, your own observation of what is passing around you—Does our education prepare us for such atrocities? Do our laws connive at them? [. . .] Dearest Miss Morland, what ideas have you been admitting? (199–200)

The empirical is, Tilney argues, the basis of true knowledge; Catherine must eschew the speculative and return to "observation" and her "sense of the probable." Crucially, Tilney sends Catherine back to her "own understanding," the faculty of individual reason that separates human beings from Roman Catholics. Catherine may be the susceptible product of undiscriminating reading, but Tilney's position is undercut, to say the least, by his complacency. Unable to countenance the suggestion of evil, he falls back on what Tom Woodman has aptly identified as a "distinctively British tendency to believe that Christianity is simply a matter of being an ordinary decent individual" (142). We are clearly invited to consider whether or not the mere fact of an English, Christian (Protestant, obviously) culture disproves the possibility of murder, while the idea that atrocities are something that education might "prepare us for" is a manifestly comic example of complacent liberalism. The un-English gothic novel has led Catherine astray. What happens in gothic novels, argues Tilney, the embodiment of English chauvinism, could never happen here; what's more, the telling distinction between the "real" world of *Northanger Abbey* and the fictive world of the gothic is assimilated into a wider opposition of England and Europe:

> Charming as were all Mrs. Radcliffe's works, and charming even as were the works of all her imitators, it was not in them perhaps that human nature, at least in the midland counties of England, was to be looked for. Of the Alps and Pyrenees, with their pine forests and their vices, they might give a faithful delineation; and Italy, Switzerland, and the South of France, might be as fruitful in horrors as they were there represented. (202)

Europe's Catholic countries may indeed, Catherine hypothesizes, be as corrupt and grotesque as the gothic novels that are set in them. Catholic Europe is, for Catherine Morland and the wiser Lucy Snowe, and perhaps for the daughters of the vicarage who created them, both geographically and morally exotic.[1] As part of their journey to full maturity, both Catherine and Lucy must come to learn that evil does not exist; that English common sense is enough.

These are the values that re-emerge in the Leavis's great tradition: literary realism and the moral significance of the provincial. Where there is evidence that Catholic belief in Britain is indigenous and nonsensationalist, the question of literary value is fudged. For example, although unable to praise a Catholic novel, Q. D. Leavis concedes that Mrs. Inchbald's *A Simple Story* "though written by a good Catholic from an Old Catholic family is notably different from the novels of our Catholic converts of recent times" (315). There's more than a suggestion of snobbery in Leavis's account of Mrs. Inchbald's "Old Catholic family," and the badness of, say, the novels of Greene and Waugh is implicitly connected with these authors' rootless convert status. The position that Leavis speaks from isn't straightforward anti-Catholicism or straightforward snobbery but a trade-off between the two.

That said, there was nothing democratizing about the defenses of Catholicism made by Leavis's contemporaries. T. S. Eliot, for instance, in the title essay of *For Lancelot Andrewes*, argued that "a Church is to be judged by its intellectual fruits, by its influence on the sensibility of the most sensitive and on the intellect of the most intelligent" (13). Twenty years later, he made the point more explicitly in *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture*, in which he proclaimed that "the convert of the intellectual or sensitive type is drawn towards the more Catholic type of worship and doctrine" (80). He goes on: "such phenomena as the progress to religious faith through cultural attraction are both natural and acceptable" (81), making the point that there's nothing wrong with being drawn toward conversion by the trappings of Catholic worship. But he's *not* making the point that Catholic worship is superior because it makes religious experience more widely accessible. Eliot's Catholic apologetics don't actually touch on the issue of religious experience; on the contrary, the virtue of Catholic belief seems to be in the way it sets up an aristocracy of taste. Those in possession of "culture" form what Eliot refers to as the "intellectual aristocracy," ("Second Thoughts" 489), a club of "intellectual" and "sensitive" souls such as, presumably, Eliot himself.

Thus, the social conservatism at the heart of the Leavis aesthetic is almost echoed by Eliot's religious elitism. At times, his championing of the Catholic cause looks like a tacky attempt to distance himself from the perceived populism of his age. The end of Catholic influence on culture will, Eliot concludes, lead to "many centuries of barbarism" (*Notes* 122), a view shared by one of his contemporaries, the Catholic art historian E. I. Watkin, who predicted "a long period of uncultured mass civilization, beneath some form or other of totalitarian despotism" (159). A horror of mass culture, the dreaded "age of Hooper" (331) so feared by Waugh's Charles Ryder, characterizes the social thought of a number of early twentieth-century converts.

But Eliot occupies an intriguing place in the creation of literary value, not least because it is unexpected to find a poet with such a long-lasting influence on the development of the *novel*'s study. Despite his centrality in the literary establishment as editor of the highbrow, idea-shaping *Criterion* and as an independent cultural critic, his championing of eccentric novelists such as Djuna Barnes (whose use of religious rhetoric we shall further explore), David Jones, and George Barker (both Catholic converts) while he was an editor at Faber places him awkwardly between the Cambridge academics and the RC converts. Eliot is not, for example, interested in the mainstream of British modernists (Woolf, Forster, Lawrence, Conrad, et al.), with its emphasis on complex interiority and the individual worldview, but in writers with a less liberal conception of the self. His own *Anglo*-Catholic conversion of 1927 undoubtedly heightens the ambivalence of his position between the center and the margins of British modernism. George Orwell was quick to see Eliot's apostasy in political terms and surmised that he and his coreligionists "would probably choose Fascism" over a "more democratic form of Socialism" ("Whale" 509). Describing the flurry of conversions in the 1920s, he wrote:

> It is significant that these people went almost invariably to the Roman Church and not, for instance, to the C of E, the Greek Church or the Protestant sects. They went, that is, to the Church with a world-wide organisation, the one with a rigid discipline, the one with power and prestige behind it. Perhaps it is even worth noticing that the only latter-day convert of really first-rate gifts, Eliot, has embraced not Romanism but Anglo-Catholicism, the ecclesiastical equivalent of Trotskyism. (515)

It's also worth noticing how sharply this near-contemporary account differs from later ones: whereas Orwell sees Catholic conversion as a strategic move toward worldly as well as spiritual power, later critics have seen a romantic flight to society's anachronistic margins. John Carey, for instance, has written of Evelyn Waugh's bid to join "the persecuted nobility" (83). This shift in perception is significant because it highlights the greater *political* realities attached by Orwell, Eliot, and the Leavises' generation to the act of conversion. In "Thoughts After Lambeth," Eliot reflected on the reception of *For Lancelot Andrewes,* his collection of essays on religious themes, and described the reaction of one representative reviewer in the *TLS:*

> He made it the occasion for what I can only describe as a flattering obituary notice. In words of great seriousness and manifest sincerity, he pointed out that I had suddenly arrested my progress—whither he had supposed me to be moving I do not know—and that to his distress I was unmistakably moving off in the wrong direction. Somehow I had failed, and had admitted my failure; if not a lost leader, at least a lost sheep; what is more, I was a kind of traitor. (368)

Eliot doesn't say what exactly he was thought to have betrayed, although the nationalistic "traitor" is certainly suggestive. He has perhaps betrayed his fellow moderns and is moving backward by returning to the faith of earlier generations: Catholicism, this view suggests, is part of the bad old world that modernists should be rejecting.

This idea is also implicit in Cyril Connolly's account of conversion in *Enemies of Promise,* first published in 1938. Connolly was extremely sympathetic to the antirealist, modernist aesthetic promoted by Eliot's editorial work, singling out Barnes's *Nightwood* and Jones's difficult hybrid poem-novel *In Parenthesis* as "glimpses of a revival in imaginative writing" (79); nonetheless, he identified Catholic conversion as an escape and an indulgence. He wrote warningly of the converts in his circle—

> people of exceptional sensibility, poetically-minded writers for whom the ugliness of materialism is a source of horror. Are they escaping from their talent or from conditions which would have rendered impossible their use of it? We must wait and see. Religious faith involves the surrender of the intellect but not of the sensibility, which under its protection may long continue to develop. Yet for an intellectual, joining a church implies regression, it is a putting on of blinkers, a hiding under the skirts of one of the great reactionary political forces of the world [;] and the poet drawn to the confessional by the smell of incense finds himself defending the garrotte and Franco's Moors. Art becomes a means not an end to the churchman as to the politician. Churches are the retreat of artists with aesthetic appreciation,

> delicate humour, ethical sensibility and a sense of spiritual reality, who lack the enquiring mind, the constructive intellectual fearlessness which is the historical factor in western civilisation and which has now moved far onwards from religion. (108)

Interestingly for a writer of this politically grim period, Connolly's version of history is classically liberal: individualistic ("intellectual fearlessness") and progressive ("moved far onwards"). Notwithstanding the violence of the era, Connolly is, in fact, almost complacent about the unlimited potentialities of secular inquiry and human knowledge. These metaphors of movement that Connolly and Eliot (paraphrasing the *TLS* reviewer) use to denote conversion—"arrested my progress," "moving off in the wrong direction"—are evocative: the journey most frequent in the 1930s was, of course, that made by communist fellow travelers. That the image of the frontier is central to the literature of the 30s is almost a critical cliché, but Bernard Bergonzi's observation that "the idea of life as a border between heaven and hell, salvation and damnation, whether expressed as a green baize door or a state border or an international frontier, was a major constituent of Greene's fiction" (81) illustrates the coincidence in Graham Greene's novels of political and spiritual journeys.

Much has been written of the ideological "travels" of the 30s, but the religious conversions, and the reactions to them, are inseparable from them. This intersection of aesthetics and realpolitik is most explicit in Connolly's closing comment that the defense of an unworldly aesthetic means the acceptance of ugly political realities: "the garrotte and Franco's Moors." It appears that Eliot was entirely aware of the rhetoric of regression and fascism being used as a weapon to attack his conversion, writing in "Religion and Literature" of the view that anyone suggesting the inadequacy of secular individualism "must be either a mediaevalist, wishful only to set back the clock, or else a fascist, and probably both" (397). Certainly Orwell made the accusation of fascism in plain terms when he grounded his disgust with what he called "stinking RCs" on a combination of aesthetic and political judgments: in "Spilling the Spanish Beans" he will not countenance the idea that Franco had any popular support, and blames instead "the land owning aristocracy and the huge parasitic Church" for the fascist triumph (272). Like Leavis, he also, famously, thought the novel "practically a Protestant form of art; it is a product of the free mind, of the autonomous individual" ("Whale" 518)—an account that echoes Lucy Snowe's "heretic narrative." To Orwell, the novel must be subversive rather than reactionary; and in direct contrast to Eliot, he argued that adherence to Roman Catholicism renders artistic achievement impossible.

On the face of it, Graham Greene, because of his left-wing political stances, seems more easily aligned with Orwell than Eliot. He clearly tried to distance himself from the aesthetic elitism that Eliot had attached to Catholicism. In an essay notionally on Henry James, he wrote that "no one can long fail to discover how superficial is the purely aesthetic appeal of Catholicism; it is more accidental than the closeness of turf" (43). This claim, however, sits uneasily with the recurrence of Catholicism as a motif in Greene's fiction. Certainly his protestations cut no ice with Flannery O'Connor, herself a cradle Catholic, who accused him of "neo-Romantic decadence" (108), a charge that might be supported by the language in which Greene rejected the Protestant middle ground:

> The Anglican Church had almost relinquished Hell. It smoked and burned on Sundays only in obscure provincial pulpits, but no day passed in a Catholic Church without prayers for deliverance from evil spirits "wandering through the world for the ruin of souls." ("Henry James" 49)

In Greene's account of the demise of evil, we see him arguing for the restoration of a sense of spiritual reality in a much more direct way than Eliot ever did. But we also see here a decadent relishing of the melodramatic language of Hell; Greene is almost reclaiming the gothic rhetoric of anti-Catholicism. Only in Catholic doctrine and practice can evil spirits be seen to wander the earth like Melmoth, Charles Maturin's archtempter and holy fool (a juxtaposition that would surely have appealed to Greene). Greene's comments also reveal, however, a real nostalgia, a conservatism in its own way as reactionary as Leavis's orderly utopia.

It is easy to see how the moral nostalgia of the Catholic converts collapses into an even less appealing social nostalgia. Evelyn Waugh's arguments for the restoration of a sense of moral transcendence are compromised by the same snobbish concern with rootedness that marks the thinking of detractors like Leavis. *Brideshead Revisited* is, above all else, a literalizing of Eliot's metaphor of Catholic taste as an aristocracy, and the strategy rather compromises the metaphor by exposing Waugh's snobbery to easy ridicule. As an artist, the loathsome Ryder feels an affinity with the aristocratic Flytes, but being a rootless individual, he is ultimately unable to join their Catholic ranks even by converting to their faith. Rootedness features heavily in Waugh's thinking: Lady Marchmain, of course, brings her husband back "to the faith of [his] ancestors" (212). Charles is ultimately shackled by his rationalist upbringing, his unrepentant empiricism confirmed by the manner of his conversion: a deathbed "sign" from Lord Marchmain that he has made his peace with God. In contrast, Sebastian, at ease with what he sees as Catholicism's failures of taste, its occasional vulgarities and whimsies, is a Catholic because it's "a lovely idea" (84), a concept entirely unimaginable to the pious Charles. Charles ends the story as rootless as he has begun it: "homeless, childless, [. . .] loveless" (330), and finally excluded from the religion that he has, for whatever reasons, embraced. He is left holding the extinguished light from the Brideshead chapel, "a beaten-copper lamp of deplorable design," unable to accept its symbolically grotesque charm.[2]

But what is much more interesting about *Brideshead Revisited* is that Waugh, like Greene, recycles the rhetoric of anti-Catholic propaganda. In terms of the gothic, this is obvious in the book's setting: the barren family occupies a doomed castle with a moribund retainer in the attic. Vestigial anxieties about the foreignness of Catholicism are evident in the creation of Anthony Blanche, self-confessed "degenerate old d-d-dago" (259). It is through Anthony Blanche that the gothic rhetoric finds its comic expression, when Charles is told of Sebastian's *"very sinister"* and "quite, quite *gruesome"* family (53). According to Blanche, Brideshead is like "something archaic, out of a cave that's been sealed for centuries"; "There ought to be an Inquisition especially set up to burn [Julia]"; "Nothing is known of [Cordelia] *yet* except that her governess went mad and drowned herself"; Lord Marchmain is "a magnifico, a voluptuary, Byronic, bored, infectiously slothful"; and Lady Marchmain "keeps a small gang of enslaved and emaciated prisoners for her exclusive enjoyment. *She sucks their blood"* (54–56). However, the weirdness of Catholicism in *Brideshead Revisited* is not exclusively contained within the framing device of Anthony Blanche. John Edward Hardy accused Waugh, in entirely unambiguous terms, of bad taste:

> Unfortunately, Julia's impassioned monologue, in which, following her brother's rebuke, she envisages the sufferings of Christ

> and her rejection of Him that marriage to Charles would constitute, is as vulgar in its way as Brideshead's own self-righteousness. The rank sentimentality of the reminiscences of "Mummy" and "Nanny stitching by the hearth," combined with an evocation of the Crucifixion carries vulgarity to the verge of blasphemy. (164)

Waugh has transgressed the standard of literary taste. By being vulgar and sentimental, he has been caught out in melodrama. The standard of taste is, presumably, realist decorum. Once again, Catholicism is identified, and identifies itself, with low culture.

The immaturity of Sebastian (whose namesake is both Catholic martyr and homoerotic icon) illustrates further targets of middlebrow prejudice: sexual ambiguity and arrested growth. Angus Wilson's defense of the unfashionable modernist Ronald Firbank revealed his disgust for the ubiquitous Leavisite "adjectives of approbation—mature, vital, healthy, life-enhancing, adult" ("View" 134). Wilson identified himself with Firbank, who, for all his playfulness, was a Roman Catholic convert; and alongside Truman Capote and the Sitwell siblings, Wilson and Firbank were accused of immaturity: John McCormick wrote that these writers "share with Firbank a taste for excessive stylization, an adolescent desire to shock, a fondness for exotic paraphernalia, and an inadequately reasoned and therefore irresponsible attack on social shibboleth" (299). McCormick identified the shared features of what we might, with the benefit of post-60s hindsight, term a camp sensibility. More importantly, they were all "adolescent." But Catholics are not mature moral agents; Orwell's notes for an essay on Waugh's early work pronounced that "[o]ne cannot really be Catholic & grown up" ("Extracts" 513).

But why is maturity such an unqualified good? Certainly it could be argued that the milieux of many twentieth-century Catholic novels are often artificial ones that keep their inhabitants in states of suspended development: armies (Waugh and Greene), schools and hostels (Spark), and even, it could be argued, universities (Lodge). In *Villette*, however, even the Catholic M. Paul is forced to admire the internalized morality of young Englishwomen; a Protestant girl like Lucy has no need for the institutional "surveillance" he provides for his Catholic charges. What's at stake is the issue of character, in the literary sense. It's the liberal tradition of literary criticism that has given character such priority, and it's that maneuver that was profoundly limiting for English criticism immediately before and after the war. Character in life and the novel were conflated because Leavisite criticism tapped into the evangelical spirit of the nineteenth century: good books are *improving* books. The liberal and evangelical version of character, in the real-life and literary senses, is that people are capable of changing. As far as evangelical religion goes, the idea of character development is obvious in the proliferation of pamphlets on self-help, thrift, and temperance, among the most prominent examples of Low Church virtues, which were moral ripostes to the Oxford Movement's "Tracts for the Times," which endorsed an altogether less earthbound version of personal development.

In his attack on Irving Babbitt, Eliot, in fact, described humanism as "Protestant theology in its last agonies" (475), and it is in the humanist idea of character in life and the novel that evangelicalism and liberalism coincide. In liberal thought, the idea that people can change is self-evident: John Stuart Mill likens human nature to the growth of a tree:

> Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing. (123)

A similar organic metaphor is placed in the mouth of the aptly named Rev. Farebrother, *Middlemarch*'s archetypally anodyne Church of England vicar, who warns Dorothea that "Character is not cut in marble—it is not something solid and unalterable. It is something living and changing, and may become diseased as our bodies do" (734–35).

The ubiquity of the liberal account of character, and the historical association of liberalism with realism, mean that the well-documented prevalence of realist modes in the postwar period entails the kind of criticism that sees literature in moral terms and inevitably judges books on such things as "character development." The central premise of W. J. Harvey's *Character and the Novel* is that "great novels exist to reveal and explore character" (23), and thus "the novel is the distinct art form of liberalism" because of its interest in the "plenitude, diversity and individuality of human beings in society" (24). Likewise, John Bayley's *The Characters of Love* argues for the moral autonomy of fictional characters: authors must acknowledge their "independent existence as *other people*"

(7) and show "a respect for their freedom" (8). This is the same rhetoric that we have already seen in Orwell's writing when he argues that the novel itself "is the product of the free mind, of the autonomous individual." Thirty years after Orwell, the ideas of autonomy and freedom have slipped from the affiliation of the author to the presentation of character, but the underlying political current is the same: an anxiety about the doctrinaire.

Both Harvey and Bayley were writing their polemics in the 60s, at the same time as Wilson and Murdoch were castigating the novel's unquestioning adherence to social values inadequate to represent the enormities of modern history. (In relation to the marriage of Bayley and Murdoch, the critical discord offers an interesting digression for a biographer.) However, we may see both these conflicting lines of argument as different attempts to deal with the trauma of the early twentieth century. Implicit in Bayley's and Harvey's comments is a recent world in which people's "autonomy" and "freedom" have been ignored; in Murdoch's and Wilson's view, the novel needs to be less equivocating in its moral worldview, less optimistic about the potentialities of the human agent: character is, for Murdoch and Wilson, less knowable and predictable than the novel has allowed. If we identify the centrality of character in the mainstream of the novel tradition, we can see why Roman Catholic novels might have been marginalized: characters in these novels do not always conform to liberal ideals of character development. But if literary criticism inherited its emphasis on character development from liberalism and evangelical Protestantism, why would we expect them to? Instead of character development—the gradual unfolding of an organic self in relation to society—we see the self manifest itself with less predictability.

In the non-Leavisite tradition, the novel begins with the non-English Catholic Cervantes and the infinitely memorable Don Quixote, whose character is neither more nor less than language. The don writes himself into existence and is subsequently read when the first volume of his adventures reaches the printers. Instead of character development, we have character determination. Quixote's decision to become a knight is neither more nor less than a series of performative speech acts, whereby he becomes Don Quixote (the doubt about his "real" name alerts us to questions of identity that the British novel hasn't taught us to ask), his unnamed workhorse becomes Rocinante, and Aldonza Lorenzo becomes

Dulcinea del Toboso because he says that she has: "To conclude, I imagine that everything is exactly as I say, without addition or diminution; and I represent her to my thoughts just as I wish her to be both in beauty and quality" (203). His return to his old "self" is enacted with equal suddenness and decision. In this alternative tradition, character is performed, either remaining static as a dramatic persona or rapidly "converting." Here, ironically, the free potentialities of the fictional character are most strongly foregrounded. Enacted always and exclusively in the meeting point of language and desire, change is possible; but the point is that we can't see why and how the change happens. Crucially, a Catholic tradition beginning with Cervantes would be a way of reconciling the metaphysical and the metafictional. Whereas the English novel is linked with Protestantism, realism, and the "free mind," metafiction—the disclosure of realism's unreality—signals the bogus coherence of the closed and consolatory narrative.

By way of tracing a metafictional tradition of character, we might turn to the work of some thoroughly rootless twentieth-century novelists with declared antirealist and religious sympathies: Djuna Barnes, Graham Greene, and Muriel Spark. (The reluctance of the latter two to be identified as Catholic novelists tells its own story of perceived prejudice.) Barnes was not, of course, a Catholic, but her appropriation of a decadent religious rhetoric is characteristic of the writings of the converts of her period. In a spectacularly unfestive poem written to commemorate Eliot's seventieth birthday, Barnes imagines Christian history reversed, so that Christ dies rather than being resurrected, and Lucifer is on the ascendant rather than being cast down:

> From the ground the knife of Cain
> Slays the brother it has slain.
> To Moses' empty gorge, like smoke
> Rush backward all the words he spoke.
> Lucifer roars up from earth.
> Down falls Christ into his death. . . .
> "She, supposing him to be the gardener . . ."

This use of religion has all the perversity of Greene (the triumph of evil) and the sentimental vulgarity of Waugh (the phony quiet of the upside-down epigraph). It is not surprising, then, that her treatment of character in *Nightwood*, a novel referred to en passant in *The Great Tradition* as "insignificant" (38), is immediately striking for its rejection of the liberal consensus about selfhood. The character of Dr. Matthew-Mighty-grain-of-salt-Dante-O'Connor stands out for his quixotic blend of pathos, courage, altruism, and, critically, self-determination. Many of O'Connor's pronouncements are about self-definition:

> I am no herbalist, I am no Rutebeuf, I have no panacea, I am not a mountebank—that is, I cannot or will not stand on my head. I'm no tumbler, neither a friar, nor yet a thirteenth-century Salome dancing arse up on a pair of Toledo blades. (17)

Alternately, he is "a medical man" (20), "a divine idiot and a wise man" (28), "anonymous" (74), "nocturnal hag" (81), "a fisher of men" (87), "the Old Woman who lives in the closet" (124), and "an old worn out lioness, a coward in my corner, for the sake of my bravery I've never been one thing that I am, to find out what I am" (146). As Sarah Henstra notes, his narration is characterized by "role-playing and self-specularity" (126); self-dramatization is, Matthew argues, part of the act of speaking:

> "Look here," said the doctor. "Do you know what has made me the greatest liar this side of the moon, telling my stories to people like you, to take the mortal agony out of their guts, and to stop them from rolling about, and drawing up their feet, and screaming, with their eyes staring over their knuckles with misery which they are trying to keep off, saying, 'Say something, doctor, for the love of God!' And me talking away like mad. Well that, and nothing else, has made me the liar I am." (122)

Being made to speak entails being made to lie. According to the doctor, Robin, on the other hand, "can't 'put herself in another's place,' she herself is the only 'position'" (132). By being more uniquely *herself* (in a novel in which characters constantly shift their shapes) Robin is not free. Pace Bayley and Harvey, the realized individual character is, in fact, the least free of all.

This irony reversed—that the freest character is the least realized—is central to Muriel Spark's work. This is nowhere truer than in *The Driver's Seat,* the heroine of which aims to get murdered. As Lise prepares for her own murder, a preparation that takes up the whole novel until the last two paragraphs, we know that her death is imminent because of Spark's characteristic prolepsis. The third chapter opens:

> She will be found tomorrow morning dead from multiple stab-wounds, her wrists bound with a silk scarf and her ankles bound with a man's necktie, in the grounds of an empty villa, in a park of the foreign city to which she is travelling on the flight now boarding at Gate 14. (37)

The detachment of the narrative voice is exacerbated by Spark's mimicry of the language of future newspaper reports ("multiple stab-wounds," "man's necktie"). Lise is cast as a victim, and we only find out when she exhorts her attacker "in four languages" (159) to kill her that she has, in fact, been in "the driver's seat" all along, and what looked like omniscient narration has simply been free indirect discourse: even that proleptic anticipation of the newspaper reports has proceeded from the character's imagination. Her narrator has given her complete freedom, as Bayley and Harvey have suggested an author should, and yet the product of that freedom is that Lise remains unknowable: "Who knows her thoughts? Who can tell?" (74). Ironically, instead of freedom creating the liberal ideal of rounded character, as Bayley and Harvey suggest, Spark gives autonomy to a character who consequently becomes depthless and unmotivated. The driver's seat is the death of character.

Greene championed and subsidized the younger Catholic author, Muriel Spark, in the early part of her career as she was making the transition from writing poetry to writing fiction. The idea of character is problematized in an explicitly metafictional way in *The End of the Affair*, narrated as it is by a successful author who, with his filmable novels, technical prowess, and fictive interests in adultery, sounds rather like Greene himself. This author-narrator, Bendrix, worries about his capacity to create convincingly "free" characters:

> Always I find when I begin to write there is one character who obstinately will not come alive. There is nothing psychologically false about him, but he sticks, he has to be pushed around, words have to be found for him, all the technical skill I have acquired through the laborious years has to be employed in making him appear alive to my readers. Sometimes I get a sour satisfaction when a reviewer praises him as the best-drawn character in the story: if he has not been drawn he has certainly been dragged. He lies heavily on my mind whenever I start to work like an ill-digested meal on the stomach, robbing me of the pleasure of

> creation in any scene where he is present. He never does the unexpected thing, he never surprises me, he never takes charge. Every other character helps, he only hinders.
>
> And yet one cannot do without him. I can imagine a God feeling in just that way about some of us. The saints, one would suppose, in a sense create themselves. They are capable of the surprising act or word. They stand outside the plot, unconditioned by it. But we have to be pushed around. We have the obstinacy of non-existence. We are inextricably bound to the plot, and wearily God pushes us, here and there, according to his intention, characters without poetry, without free will, whose only importance is that somewhere, at some time, we help to furnish the scene in which a living character moves and speaks, providing perhaps the saints with the opportunities for *their* free will. (185–86)

There is no "person" in the individualistic, liberal sense. The human self is defined by the actions in which it participates: it is "inextricably bound to the plot." The pessimistic determinism of Bendrix's view (perhaps speaking for his own author) is striking, almost Calvinist in its idea of the elect: only Greene's saints, and almost certainly his Dostoevskian sinners, can attain freedom. The mediocre character, the ordinary self, needs to have his words "found for him"; this is the character that reviewers praise because they know how to read him.

Although one could almost certainly identify Quixote in the figure of the whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory* (1940), Greene's long interest in Cervantes came to fruition in his powerful late novel, *Monsignor Quixote* (1982), a rewrite of Cervantes's novel. In a comic stroke, the country priest Father Quixote becomes a monsignor and embarks on a voyage with his own materialist Sancho Panza, a deposed communist mayor, Zancas (the "real" surname of Cervantes's Sancho). It is the monsignor's faith in his ancestry that puts this new Quixote at odds with his commonsensical community:

> Father Quixote had reason to be afraid of bishops; he was well aware how much his own bishop, who regarded him in spite of his distinguished ancestry as a little better than a peasant, disliked him. "How can he be descended from a fictional character?" he had demanded in a private conversation which had been promptly reported to Father Quixote.

> The man to whom the bishop had spoken asked with surprise, "A *fictional* character?"
>
> "A character in a novel by an overrated writer called Cervantes—a novel moreover with many disgusting passages which in the days of the Generalissimo would not even have passed the censor."
>
> "But, Your Excellency, you can see the house of Dulcinea in El Toboso. There it is marked on a plaque: the house of Dulcinea."
>
> "A trap for tourists. Why," the bishop went on with asperity, "Quixote is not even a Spanish patronymic. Cervantes himself says the surname was probably Quixada or Quesada or even Quexana, and on his deathbed Quixote calls himself Quixano."
>
> "I can see that you have read the book then, Your Excellency."
>
> "I have never got beyond the first chapter. Although of course I have glanced at the last. My usual habit with novels."
>
> "Perhaps some ancestor of the father was called Quixada or Quexana."
>
> "Men of that class have no ancestors." (12–13)

The same concern with Monsignor Quixote's origins recurs, as in the original, near the moment of his death, which occurs when Rocinante (a Seat 600) crashes into a wall, chased by the police:

> "They are wanted for causing a riot and stealing money."
>
> "Nonsense. The man in the car is a monsignor. Monsignors don't steal money. What is your friend's name?" he asked the stranger.
>
> "Monsignor Quixote."
>
> "Quixote? Impossible," Professor Pilbeam said.
>
> "Monsignor Quixote of El Toboso. A descendant of the great Don Quixote himself."
>
> "Don Quixote had no descendants. How could he? He's a fictional character."
>
> "Fact and fiction again, professor. So difficult to distinguish," Father Leopoldo said. (240)

Of course fictional characters can have descendants; the idea of influence is a staple of our understanding of literary traditions. Leaving aside the questions of authorship and intentionality, contemporary scholarship may understand this in terms of the intertextual. The idea that fact and fiction may be "difficult to distinguish" is likewise not one to raise scholarly eyebrows. Greene's interest in the unknowable, in the limits of Enlightenment values, is itself almost indistinguishable from the concerns of the postmodern novel.

Certainly David Lodge's rewrite of the realist classic *North and South* explicitly indicates this correlation of religious concerns, the kind I have been discussing in this essay, and the standard history of the novel. The second chapter of *Nice Work* opens with a rumination on the liberal idea of character:

> And there for the time being, let us leave Vic Wilcox, while we travel back an hour or two in time, a few miles in space, to meet a very different character. A character who, rather awkwardly for me, doesn't herself believe in the concept of character. That is to say (a favourite phrase of her own), Robyn Penrose, Temporary Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Rummidge, holds that "character" is a bourgeois myth, an illusion created to reinforce the ideology of capitalism. As evidence for this assertion she will point to the fact that the rise of the novel (the literary genre of "character" *par excellence*) in the eighteenth century coincided with the rise of capitalism; and that the modernist and postmodernist deconstruction of the classic novel in the twentieth century has coincided with the terminal crisis of capitalism.
>
> Why the classic novel should have collaborated with the spirit of capitalism is perfectly obvious to Robyn. Both are expressions of a secularized Protestant ethic, both dependent on the idea of an autonomous individual self who is responsible for and in control of his/her own destiny, seeking happiness and fortune in competition with other autonomous selves. (39)

Robyn is, of course, a character; we gain insight into her "self" from the account of how and why she rejects the concept of character; her rejection of character is derived from the received wisdom about the novel's origins. But is the self-consciousness of *Nice Work* (a contemporary work by a Catholic author) further evidence of the unease that has always run beneath the mainstream of the novel tradition, about the liberal treatment of character? Or is it part of a more contemporary phenomenon:

the "postmodernist deconstruction of the classic novel"? In short, it could be both. The authorial intervention bears some resemblance to John Fowles's famous answer to the question of "Who is Sarah?" as well as to Spark's rhetorical questions in *The Driver's Seat* ("Who knows her thoughts? Who can tell?").[3] The author intervenes ("awkwardly for me") to disrupt the realist momentum and, like Fowles, uses the conventional "unread" interruption of a chapter break to signal a change of fictional level. At the end of the twentieth century, we see a coincidence of the metafictional and the metaphysical: the strategies of the "Catholic" novel, with its rejection of liberal, realist orthodoxies, become postmodern truisms. And, in a final irony, Catholicism's uncompromising belief in realities beyond the reach of human reason becomes indistinguishable from the radical skepticism of the postmodern.

Was there ever, though, what Lodge—or rather the comically complacent Robyn—terms a "classic novel" tradition? Even the early British novel had an edgy relationship to character: *Tristram Shandy, Clarissa, Gulliver's Travels, Tom Jones,* and *Moll Flanders* certainly cannot be located in Leavis's idyllic community of church and market. Austen won't fit either, because, despite the "mutual knowledge" possible in her almost faultlessly stratified world, the supposedly concomitant "roundedness" of her characters is far from self-evident. Later in the nineteenth century, most canonical authors will not fit into this category of the "classic novel." Indeed, it seems to be a category occupied solely by George Eliot, and the accusation of impurity—the contamination by "lower" literary forms—leveled at Catholic novelists would likewise preclude most major writers from the canon: the Brontës (too gothic), Dickens (too sentimental), Meredith (too camp), and Hardy (too melodramatic). The Protestant novel wasn't so much a phase in the novel's history as a phase in *the history of the novel's history*. Peter Brooks uses *Don Quixote* to suggest that "One could argue with some plausibility that the novel as a genre incorporates the antinovel—its critical reflection—from the earliest stages of its history" (317). Gothic, foreign, fascist, and immature as they were variously labeled, novelists with moral interests beyond secularized Protestantism have always, in this sense, been antinovelists.

Notes

1. I'm grateful to Patricia Smith for pointing out that Austen and Brontë were both daughters of Church of England ministers.

2. Describing how the British Roman Catholic converts were seduced by an idealized version of Catholicism, David Lodge writes of English Catholicism that "its sacred art and architecture were generally in deplorable taste" ("The Catholic Church" 33).

3. Fowles writes: "Who is Sarah? Out of what shadows does she come?" and answers: "I do not know. This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I create never existed outside my own mind" (96–97).

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The Ethnographer's Story: *Mama Day* and the Specter of Relativism

Robin Blyn

> Ethnographic writings can be properly called fictions in the sense of "something made or fashioned." . . . But it is important to preserve the meaning not merely of making, but also of making up, of inventing things not actually real.
>
> —James Clifford, "Partial Truths" (6)

> It ain't about right or wrong, truth or lies; it's about a slave woman who brought a whole new meaning to both them words, soon as you cross over here from beyond the bridge.
>
> —Gloria Naylor, *Mama Day* (3)

Nowhere is the relationship between cross-cultural exchange and interdisciplinary method more contentious, perhaps, than in contemporary ethnography's anxious alliance with prose fiction. For at stake in both is the production and interpretation of narrative. Insofar as ethnographic experiments in storytelling are asked to correct the protocols of an outdated universalism and its untenable claims to scientific objectivity, they court a radical relativism that evokes profound discomfort even in anthropology's most poststructurally minded self-critiques. If, as James Clifford suggests, fiction and ethnography are equivalent discursive constructs, wherein lies the authority of the ethnographer? What separates the "partial truths" of the ethnography from "mere literature" ("Partial Truths" 6, 26)?

Gloria Naylor's 1988 novel *Mama Day* represents postmodern fiction's explicit entry into debates about ethnographic authority. In its constructions of both the subject and the object of ethnography, Naylor's novel focuses on the threat of cultural relativism as seen from the "native's point of view."[1] Contrary to anthropology's most celebrated metacriticism, *Mama Day* reveals that the most urgent threat of relativism is not the resulting tenuousness of Western ethnography's "truths" but the veiled power structure that holds them in place and the consequent political impact they have on non-Western populations. That power structure, *Mama Day* insists, is indebted to the rhetorical confusion of space and time conventionalized in Western ethnography. As it underscores the spatial and temporal vicissitudes of the particular mode of transculturation we currently call ethnography, Naylor's novel makes visible the paradoxical confirmation of Western hegemony enacted under the aegis of cultural relativism itself. Moreover, as it claims its own autoethnographic authority, *Mama Day* dramatizes the rhetorical construction of cultural autonomy as a radically transcultural undertaking shaped to changing political exigencies. Effectively, *Mama Day* offers in the form of the novel the same critique of cultural relativism that was articulated in the discourse of postcolonial theory in the years immediately following the novel's publication.[2] In contrast to the postcolonial critique of the postmodern, however, Naylor's novel refuses to disown the very relativism it so energetically interrogates. Critiquing and celebrating relativism at different turns, *Mama Day* underscores the need for a model of cross-cultural interpretation that respects the distinctions between political autonomy and cultural autonomy even as it makes visible the complexities that attend such a project.

Incitements to relativism

Although Naylor's novel begins with the cautionary tale of a misguided ethnographer mocked by the very people he has come to study, literary criticism has remained conspicuously silent about *Mama Day*'s engagement with the charged debates about ethnographic authority occurring at precisely the time of the novel's publication. Like *Mama Day*, James Clifford's *The Predicament of Culture* was published in 1988, and both texts can be seen as responses to a decade of anthropological self-interrogation spurred by the uneven interdisciplinary assimilation of poststructural theory and ethnography's peculiar status as a "blurred genre."[3] In 1983, for example, Johannes Fabian published his book *Time and the Other,* a text that begins with an injunction to the discipline to "rediscover the obvious, namely that there is no knowledge of the Other which is not also a temporal, historical, [and] a political act" (1). Three years later James Clifford and George Marcus brought their controversial collection *Writing Culture* to press. It is in this collection that ethnography and narrative fiction are most closely and most anxiously allied. Thus *Writing Culture* is also a paradigmatic example of the anxieties attached to cultural relativism even—or especially—in a postmodern context wherein anthropology's traditional checks on absolutist conceptions of cultural difference have become untenable.

Clifford's introduction to *Writing Culture,* entitled "Partial Truths," vividly explicates the challenges to authority that emerge with a full recognition of the "poetics" of ethnography. In it, Clifford goes so far at to identify ethnography as fiction, but not without considerable ambivalence. The equivalence is legitimate, he insists, only if fiction is understood as a "partial truth," wherein "partial" signals both its ideological commitment and its incompleteness (7). Even with this caveat, however, the fear of relativism continues to pervade the text. Thus Clifford admits:

> One launches a controversial collection like this with some trepidation, hoping it will be seriously engaged—not simply rejected, for example, as another attack on science or an incitement to relativism. . . . The authors in this volume do not suggest that one cultural account is as good as another: If they espoused so trivial and self-refuting a relativism, they would not have gone to the trouble of writing detailed, committed, critical studies. (24)

As Clifford positions ethnography as a fiction, a partial truth, but one that is not "only literature" (26), he writes himself into a corner from which he can emerge only by the sheer force of assertion. Though fiction is "partial truth," it is simply not the same thing as "relative truth." As *Writing Culture* struggles to substantiate the distinction it draws between the "partial" and the "relative," it reveals how deep-seated anthropology's fears regarding cultural relativism remain, even as it takes the subjectivity of point of view and the mediations of language for granted.

In this context of highly charged debate about the status of the subject and object of anthropology, *Mama Day* represents an intervention that presages the critique of cultural relativism that has recently found expression in postcolonial theory. While anthropology's fear of relativism lies in the threat it poses to the authority of ethnographic "truths" and the discipline's status as a social science, postcolonial theory fears a different danger: that cultural relativism as a naturalized method for cross-cultural interpretation encourages a model of cultural particularism premised on what Paul Gilroy calls "absolutist conceptions of cultural difference" (15) and Salman Rushdie names "the bogey of authenticity, the respectable child of old-fashioned exoticism" (67). Framing its reflection on ethnographic method in the genre of narrative fiction, *Mama Day* simultaneously acknowledges the legitimacy of both fears. Through its explicitly subjective account of Willow Springs, *Mama Day*'s narrative simultaneously challenges the colonizing power of "partial truths" and the particularist paradigm so often marshaled against it.

The novel signals its identification with ethnographic self-critique in its introduction, wherein the story of the ethnographer, known only as Reema's Son, returns to his home community to conduct fieldwork. He returns from an American university with a tape recorder and a specialized vocabulary that transforms his home community into a collection of "unique speech patterns" worthy of "cultural preservation" (7). In that vocabulary, he reveals his training in a method of cross-cultural interpretation clearly informed by the tenets of cultural relativism and the prevailing imperative in the academic circles of his day to explicate the strategies of self-empowerment and resistance practiced by cultures threatened by colonization. Thus he interprets the local expression "18 & 23" as an "inversion of hostile social and political parameters" (8). In the hands of Reema's Son, Willow Springs is a model for a diasporic community successfully retaining its cultural identity through an active engagement with the terms of colonization imposed upon it from without.

Despite his efforts to "put Willow Springs on the map" and to celebrate its culture of heroic resistance to Western imperialism, the community of Willow Springs scorns both Reema's Son and his thesis. As an object of parody, the ethnographer in *Mama Day* never gets a proper name; he is simply

> Reema's Son. . . . The one with the pear shaped head [who] came hauling himself back from one of those fancy colleges mainside, dragging his notebooks and tape recorder and a funny way of curling his lip and clicking his teeth, all excited and determined to put Willow Springs on the map. (7)

When introducing Reema's Son, the narrative links him to the community loosely by ties of kinship. At the same time, however, the narrative insists that he is an outsider to the community he has come to study. Mocked by the unnamed narrator who speaks for Willow Springs, Reema's Son is transformed from ethnographer into the object of the native's own self-study.

Even as the Willow Springs narrator clearly and victoriously assumes the very ethnographic authority she has discredited, critical discussions of the place of Reema's Son in the novel have functioned only to confirm the narrator's diagnosis of his misinterpretation: he simply doesn't know "how to listen" (10). Lindsey Tucker, for example, reiterates the narrator's assertion that the "failure of the ethnographer is due to his inability to hear and to ask the right questions" (143), while Dorothy Perry Thompson attributes that failure to his training in the Western academy. There, she asserts, he has "distanced himself, geographically and linguistically" from Willow Springs ("New Renaissance" 38). Thus Reema's Son functions in critical discussions merely to authorize the Willow Springs narrator as objective point of view. By ignoring the status of the Willow Springs narrator as a subjective point of view, the scholarship that addresses Naylor's novel has effectively turned Reema's Son into a stock figure of Eurocentricism, assimilationism, and cultural imperialism.

Perhaps Susan Meisenhelder most clearly articulates the presumption that underlies such arguments when she maintains that Reema's Son is "[i]mbued with the values of the white world in which he has been educated" and hence "miss[es] the autonomous cultural identity of Willow Springs" (405). Operating on the assumption of a binary opposition between the "white world" and the "autonomous black world" of Willow Springs (406), Meisenhelder lays bare the intimate link between cultural particularism and claims to political autonomy. The black community is autonomous, Tucker, Thompson, and Meisenhelder all imply, only insofar as it is isolated from the ideology of the "white world." In asserting the irreducible difference of black experience, such arguments advance a model of cultural particularism at odds with the terms of the cultural relativism practiced by Reema's Son. For him, autonomy is ensured through a strategy of resistance marked by the creative transculturation of Western identifications. By contrast, for critics such as Meisenhelder, autonomy is assured through a contrary strategy of resistance, one defined by its refusal to admit Western ideology into the autonomous zone. From the particularist perspective, autonomy requires ideological purity; political autonomy requires cultural autonomy.

As their arguments enact the slippage from relativism to particularism, Meisenhelder, Tucker, and Thompson threaten to cancel in advance the possibility for what Satya Mohanty calls "vital cross-cultural interchange." That is, their arguments deny the very criteria for cross-cultural understanding that Mohanty insists on: "the belief that we share a 'world' (no matter how partially) with the other culture, a world whose causal relevance is not purely intracultural" (114). To simply claim, as Meisenhelder does, that Reema's Son fails to see the cultural autonomy of his home community only serves to make visible the ideological blind spot of the particularist argument she invokes. That is, the narrative voice that condemns Reema's Son and assumes its own autoethnographic authority gains its subversive power not in isolation but precisely in the context of cross-cultural exchange.[4]

In contrast to the critical conversation about Reema's Son, *Mama Day* insists that in order to critique Western ethnographic authority, the voice of Willow Springs must enter into a dialogue with another culture, a process that entails not only the ethnographic point of articulation but also the point of audition—that is, the audience.[5] The narrator of Willow Springs does not address the local community; she explicitly addresses a visitor, an outsider from "beyond the bridge" (7). This reconstruction of the scene of ethnography implicates the Willow Springs narrator in the very poetics and politics of interpretation for which it disparages Reema's Son. For the privileged autoethnographer in *Mama Day* is simultaneously and explicitly a storyteller, a creator of partial truths mediated significantly by time and language. Rather than being exempt from subjective relativism, the Willow Springs narrator demonstrates the burden of autoethnography as a blurred genre—the challenge of countering fiction with fiction, partial truth with partial truth, where the objective is political autonomy itself.

Since the very community it offers for interpretation must authorize the autoethnographic text, its peculiar plight is in constructing its object from a position of subjective authority grounded in the object itself. The autoethnography in *Mama Day* must be *of* Willow Springs and *by* it at the same time. In this struggle to be both *of* and *by* lurks the specter of cultural relativism. For in order to assure the political autonomy—that is, the independence—of the Willow Springs community, the Willow Springs narrator of *Mama Day* must embrace cultural relativism and deny it at different turns. Even as cultural relativism as a presumption of cross-cultural exchange appears to assure autonomy by invoking difference and equality, it has, in the practice of ethnography, proved just as effective in the project of cultural imperialism as the universalism it was originally marshaled to contest.[6] The struggle dramatized in *Mama Day* is to construct an ethnographic authority that combats the colonizing power veiled in the discourse of cultural relativism even as it resists the same threats inherent in universalism on the one hand and particularism on the other. To the extent that the novel adumbrates the complexity of this struggle and its political stakes, *Mama Day* provides an invaluable postcolonial perspective both on ethnography's ongoing project of self-fashioning and on the more general problem of cross-cultural interpretation in an inevitably politicized landscape.

Chronic dissonance

Like the work of contemporary ethnographic metacriticism, *Mama Day* can be situated in a relativist tradition that confirms the partiality of truth, its alliance with fiction, its incompleteness, and its subjective nature. In the competing narratives of its romantically attached protagonists, Cocoa and George, and in the mutually exclusive versions of the legend of Sapphira Wade, truth emerges as relative both to cultural location and to point of view. Simultaneously, as in Clifford's introduction to *Writing Culture,* the novel reflects a deep suspicion about the ultimate ends of cultural relativism as a political position. In Naylor's novel, however, the danger lies not in the epistemological crisis spurred by recognition of the subjective nature of truth, nor in the resulting acknowledgment of the affinity of ethnography with fiction. Rather, relativism emerges as a threat because it can be a tool of colonial conquest. Beneath the apparently benign rhetoric of cultural-relativist ethnography, *Mama Day* suggests, lies an imperialism accomplished by the confusion of time and space and by the construction of the ethnographic object as an isolated culture recognized by its stasis and unitary character. Ultimately the novel insists not only on the partiality of cross-cultural truths but on the political import of those truths in fraught historical moments.

Mama Day revels in the blurred boundaries between "mere literature" and ethnography that contemporary anthropology approaches so anxiously. The narrative presents itself, however playfully, as an ethnographic text of Willow Springs, a barrier island off of the coast of South Carolina and Georgia deeded to freed slaves and their descendants by their former owner. As preface matter to the narrative, the novel presents a series of documents that frame it as a modern ethnography: a kinship chart, a map, and a history, represented in the deed of sale for Sapphira Wade, the ur-mother of Willow Springs. While the narrative takes the form of an autoethnography, the terms of that autoethnography confound modern ethnographic authority, reflecting the very critique that Clifford offers in his introduction to *Writing Culture*. "It ain't about truth or lies," the narrator begins, "It's about a slave woman who brought a whole new meaning to both of them words, soon as you cross over here from beyond the bridge" (3). The collapse of the binary opposition between "truth" and "lies" occurs here at the same time as ethnography undertakes the retelling of the foundational fiction of Willow Springs, the legend of Sapphira Wade. It is a legend that "everybody knows" despite the fact that it changes "depending upon which of us takes a mind to her" (3). Even within the Willow Springs community, we are assured, "truth" will be partial, incomplete, and yoked to point of view.

Moreover, the subjective relativism of interpretation is underscored in the formal structure of the novel, explicitly linking poetics with politics. The bulk of the narrative consists of the contradictory accounts of Cocoa and George. While they are both able to identify the same event as their "worst fight ever," for example, the two versions they offer of it share nothing but the conviction that the other is to blame. In fact, each assigns blame to the other in precisely the same terms: "Our worst fight ever. And it was all your fault" (230, 232). True to its postmodern context, the novel resists synthesizing Cocoa's and George's conflicting accounts, refusing to allow its readers to forget the subjective construction of truth. Thus Cocoa concludes her version of the story by asserting that "there are just too many sides to the whole story" to represent "what really happened" (311). The resistance to dialectical synthesis, even with the introduction of a third narrator, the voice of Willow Springs, emphasizes the partiality of the truths each narrator proffers to the reader, as well as their irreducible difference.

Yet, even as the first chapter of Naylor's novel positions itself as an ethnography that flaunts the subjectivity of all truth claims, it offers a biting critique of the egalitarian pretensions inherent in its relativist ethos. It does so by telling the story of Reema's Son, the misguided ethnographer who manipulates time in the construction of his object, the people of Willow Springs. His inquiry into what the islanders mean by their expression "18 & 23" confirms his alienation from Willow Springs. For by the time Reema's Son begins his study, the narrator has already informed the reader what any inhabitant of Willow Springs knows, that the expression refers to the year 1823, when the events that inspired the legend of Sapphira Wade occurred.

The expression is thus a temporal marker, one that has become a signifier for a historically generated kind of resistance and collective suffering. Yet, despite having grown up on the island, Reema's Son comes to a conclusion that transforms time into space. According to the narrator, his book argues that

> 18 & 23 wasn't 18 & 23 at all—was really 81 & 32, which just so happened to be the lines of longitude and latitude marking off where Willow Springs sits on the map. And we were just so damned dumb that we turned the whole thing around. . . . Not that he called it being dumb, mind you, called it "asserting cultural identity," "inverting hostile social and political parameters." 'Cause, see, being we was brought here as slaves, we had no choice but to look at everything upside-down. (8)

Even as Reema's Son here offers an account of Willow Springs that celebrates resistance to colonialism, he reproduces colonial ideology, offering an account that veils his own appropriation of Willow Springs as a paradigm for "inverting hostile social and political parameters." His thesis proceeds apparently unaware that the cultural relativism it offers as a cure for stereotypes of racial inferiority has reproduced the same imperialist symptoms inherent in the original racist discourse. The account of 18 & 23 that Reema's Son provides can thus be seen as an "anticonquest narrative," a narrative in which, as Mary Louise Pratt explains, Western subjects "seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert [Western] hegemony" (7).

It is precisely the imperialist underpinnings of the anticonquest narrative that Naylor's *Mama Day* contests, offering a critique not only of the "partial truths" of Western anthropology but the time it takes to get them. Turning the very conventions of the anticonquest narrative against itself, *Mama Day* strategically dramatizes the central role of temporal manipulation in that narrative. In fact, the Willow Springs narrator offers Reema's Son's confusion of time and space as her privileged evidence for the power structure animating his anticonquest narrative. By disregarding the relationship between "18 & 23" and the year 1823, Reema's Son reads it as longitude and latitude, translating time into space. In this way, he is able to "put Willow Springs on the map," but only at the cost of rendering it atavistic. The narrator confirms as much when she suggests that just because "we was isolated off here on the island" is no reason to conclude that "we kept calling things ass-backward" while "everybody else in the country went on learning good English" (8). Reema's Son thus secures his innocence in the classic manner of the anticonquest narrator, surreptitiously reinforcing Western hegemony by placing the non-Western object of anthropology in another and less advanced temporal realm. In his hands, spatial autonomy becomes equivalent to cultural stagnation.

Placing Willow Springs in the past tense, Reema's Son represents the local culture as an anachronism, a throwback to a prior era of human development. Johannes Fabian has termed this aspect of ethnographic discourse a "denial of coevalness" defined as "a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referents of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse" (31). This he rightly construes as a "political act," a narrative device that places the object of anthropology, here Willow Springs, at a historical deficit, behind the time of Western progress.

The result, the Willow Springs narrator insists, is a form of colonization. This much she makes clear as she associates Reema's Son with the real estate developers who scheme in vain to turn Willow Springs into a "vacation paradise" (4) where "the only dark faces you see . . . is the ones cleaning the toilets and cutting the grass" (6). Yet according to the novel, the temporal manipulation of the anticonquest narrative is even more dangerous than the threatened appropriation of land, and certainly much more pervasive. When New York engineer George Andrews, the novel's paradigm for Western empiricism and scientific objectivity, first prepares to cross over to Willow Springs, it is spatial location that concerns him. "It's hard to know what to expect from a place when you can't find it on the map" (174), he says. Yet when he arrives, he effectively transforms space into time. Asserting that he "was entering another world," George claims that it "all smelled like forever" (175). For George, Willow Springs becomes a "primal" place, "self-contained" and inhabited by a people who had "redefined time" (218).

Mama Day counters George's denial of coevalness, like that of Reema's Son, through the autoethnography of the Willow Springs narrator. Repeatedly, the narrator insists on the distinction between spatial autonomy and cultural isolation and on the dynamism of the local culture. She repeatedly challenges the attempts of all of its visitors to construct the island in terms of a prior, exotic, and less-sophisticated era. The narrative's premier example of the island's vital commerce in cross-cultural exchange is in the celebration known in Willow Springs as Candle Walk. Occurring annually on December 22, Candle Walk is associated both with Christmas and with the legend of Sapphira Wade. Although Candle Walk is presented as a tradition attached to the freedom and the political autonomy of Willow Springs and its ex-slave population, the narrator emphasizes change as much as continuity in the practice. Flashlights replace candles; store-bought gifts replace the homemade. Yet the narrator offers the title character's assurance that

> It'll take generations . . . for Willow Springs to stop doing [Candle Walk] at all. And more generations again to stop talking about the time "when there used to be some kinda 18 & 23 going-on near December twenty-second." By then . . . it won't be the world as we know it no way—and so no need for the memory. (110)

In this way the autoethnographic voice of Willow Springs assures the reader that the island's culture is dynamic and—for better and for worse—in step with the developments of the Western world. As a culture, Willow Springs defies the traditional construction of the ethnographic object; it is not isolated, static, or unitary. Indeed, the novel refuses to equate spatial autonomy with cultural autonomy; in ethnographic terms, Willow Springs is a contact zone, a place where, as Pratt suggests, "disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (4). No example more persuasively demonstrates the island's vitality as a contact zone, and hence the culture's insistent coevalness with the West, than its transculturation of Shakespearean drama.

Intertextual time

It is both ironic and entirely appropriate that George Andrews, the figure who most clearly reproduces the anticonquest narrative and denial of coevalness parodied in Reema's Son, gives voice to the novel's single explicit allusion to *The Tempest,* the Shakespearean drama that grounds *Mama Day*'s colonial critique: "Well, we were hardly going according to the script," George reports as the storm retreats from Willow Springs. "The tempest had come in on cue, but you were still sleeping and I got tired of lying there waiting for you to wake up in a burst of flaming passion" (256). However unwittingly, by invoking *The Tempest* George here signals the novel's use of intertexuality as a strategy of critique that recognizes Willow Springs's political autonomy without denying its vital coevalness with the West.

Mama Day's insistence on the status of Willow Springs as a contact zone finds expression in the intertextual construction of the narrative. As an intertext, the narrative interweaves the legend of Sapphira Wade with the master narrative of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. In *Mama Day*, *The Tempest* remains, like the legend of Sapphira Wade, in the privileged condition of the "known" but "unspoken." Both legends thus persist not only in the political unconscious of Willow Springs but also in the narrative structure itself. Moreover, *Mama Day,* as a radical transculturation of Western and non-Western texts, also represents a practice of cross-culture exchange that renders its constituent tales insistently coeval. In *Mama Day*, the nineteenth-century slave narrative and the sixteenth-century drama of displacement and colonization occupy the same temporal space, the time of narrative diegesis.[7]

As both Valerie Traub and Peter Erickson argue, Naylor's fiction has long been preoccupied with Shakespearean drama, and *Mama Day* is no exception. In addition to its protracted treatment of *The Tempest,* the narrative explicitly references *Hamlet*, *King Lear,* and *Romeo and Juliet*. In so doing, *Mama Day* participates in a larger anticolonial discourse, one that includes the Caribbean and African writings of Aimé Césaire, George

Lamming, O. Manoni, and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. For these writers of the mid-twentieth century, *The Tempest* serves "as a foundational master text generally of modern anticolonial thought" (Habib 207). As Ania Loomba asserts, "for a variety of anticolonial activists, [*The Tempest*] encoded, or could be altered to indicate, the possibility of subaltern resistance" (173). If rewritings of *The Tempest* have challenged colonial and racial ideologies they perceive in Shakespeare's text, they have also drawn out critiques of those ideologies already implicit in it. Like contemporary Renaissance criticism, anticolonial revisions of the play continue to see *The Tempest* "not only as a reflection of colonialist practices but an intervention in an ambivalent and even contradictory discourse" (Brown 206).[8] In its turn, Naylor's *Mama Day* offers its own intervention in this discourse.[9]

In "Rainbows of Darkness," Valerie Traub explicitly links the different uses of Shakespeare in *Mama Day* to the struggle for self-representation (autoethnography) that resists both universalist and particularist paradigms. In *Mama Day,* Traub sees "a project of repetition/mimicry/difference" that is "marked by contradiction" (153). While *King Lear* represents the novel's "impulse toward universalization," she argues, the novel "employs *The Tempest* to assert the irreducible fact of historical and political difference" (154). I concur that the novel uses its Shakespearean subtexts to test the efficacy of universalist and particularist ideologies, but I would suggest that this produces not "contradiction" so much as evidence for the condition of autonomy within the contact zone. That is, in the arts of the contact zone, Naylor's novel finds not "irreducible difference" but difference defined in terms of transculturation. Even as the retelling of a Shakespearean drama functions as a critique of colonization, it offers a critique of the cultural imperialism of the anticonquest narrative and its construction of time. Specifically, the novel's retelling of *The Tempest* confirms the vital transculturation that informs the local culture and its temporal coevalness with the Western world. For the ethnographer who has learned to "really listen" (10) receives an intertext that elevates the tales of Shakespeare, Western culture's most esteemed literary figure, to the status of a privileged indigenous legend, the legend of Sapphira Wade.

Intertexts do not, of course, necessarily carry the weight of critique. The colonial critique in *Mama Day* is enabled by two powerful agencies: the power to read and the power to (re)write. *Mama Day* recognizes Sycorax and Caliban as diasporic subjects like the people of Willow Springs, who lose their political autonomy and become enslaved to colonial rule, and it also grants the local population the agency to continually rewrite both *The Tempest* and the legend of Sapphira Wade. Only because it does so can the novel revise *The Tempest* such that Shakespeare's text becomes a reinstantiation of the power of the displaced ex-slave, Sapphira Wade. Even as the novel provides a Miranda (Mama Day), a Sycorax figure (Sapphira), a staff and a ledger, and a storm of great proportions, *Mama Day* refuses to merely perform the script of *The Tempest*. It resists such labor as staunchly as Sapphira Wade, according to her deed of sale, "resisted under reasonable chastisement the performance of field or domestic labour" (n. pag.).

The colonial critique can be seen in the transformation of the powers that reign over Shakespeare's island. In *Mama Day,* Shakespeare's Prospero and Miranda become John-Paul and Mama Day. While they enjoy privileged genealogical standing on Willow Springs, they are not colonizers of the island but diasporic subjects, descendants of a "slave woman" who "willed" her own freedom, the freedom of her children, and secured the island as their lawful property (68). Like Prospero, both John-Paul and Mama Day possess supernatural powers, but those powers are powers to heal and protect rather than to punish and enslave.[10] Moreover, Mama Day's powers, we are told, come to her since she is the daughter of the "seventh son of the seventh son" of Sapphira Wade; power is the function of the matriarchal order, a challenge to the depiction of the matriarchy colonized by Prospero in *The Tempest.* In fact, where Prospero conjures his storm as a means of revenge, Sapphira conjures hers as a way of protecting Cocoa, the only living descendant capable of continuing the line, and the island itself. With the storm, the bridge that connects Willow Springs to the mainland US is destroyed and the traffic of cross-cultural exchange is effectively suspended in a moment of crisis. While the storm in Shakespeare's play brings the end of Prospero's exile, the storm in Naylor's novel ensures the sovereignty of the diasporic community. Resisting the master text, *Mama Day* thus rereads that tale as a romance of anticolonial resistance. In this sense, the novel can be seen as a dramatization of the very argument that Reema's Son makes about "18 & 23." It apparently turns the power structure upside down.

Yet, in its retelling of *The Tempest, Mama Day* adds to its critique of the colonial ideology embedded in the Shakespearean play an equally vital critique of the anticonquest narrative modeled in the ethnography produced by Reema's Son. Unlike Reema's Son, whose interpretation of "18 & 23" simply inverts the terms of the power structure, *Mama Day* does not offer an inversion of master and slave. Rather, the novel's transculturation of *The Tempest* admits a more complex movement across cultural borders, a process substantiated by the novel's references to additional Shakespearean texts. Among these are *King Lear*—a text that both Cocoa and George identify with and that plays an important role in their romance—and *Hamlet* (Cocoa's birth name is Ophelia, a name she shares with her great grandmother). Hence the novel's revision of *The Tempest* works less as a critical inversion of an alien text than as a negotiation of the terms of a text that has already been transculturated into Willow Springs's native lore. Just as the novel's title character refuses to condemn Candle Walk for its infusion of flashlights and store-bought gifts, the narrative refuses to see the Western literary tradition as one which must, or even can, be kept "beyond the bridge."

The distinction between the simple inversion of terms proposed by Reema's Son and the critique of the anticonquest narrative enacted in the narrative's retelling of *The Tempest* can be seen in the ways that retelling challenges the ethnographic construction of time. For the narrative of *Mama Day* does not place the Shakespearean text in an other, anterior time. Even as the reader concludes the novel, Mama Day is still alive on Willow Springs, still playing her role in a drama that gives the novel its name and assures Willow Springs both its future and its past. Great granddaughter to Sapphira Wade, Mama Day is, at the same time and in the same temporal order, Miranda. Just as the points of view in Shakespeare's play are not simply inverted, neither does the narrative privilege one temporal order over another. As an object of cultural interpretation, *The Tempest* remains as vital and dynamic as the perpetually reinvented legend of Sapphira Wade. The coevalness of the two legends suggests the coexistence of multiple temporal orders as a fact of the contact zone. Further, the novel suggests that the inevitable meeting of simultaneous constructions of time defines the diasporic community and serves as the fluid ground upon which claims to autonomy gain political force.

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Becoming indigenous

Through its parody of Reema's Son, the autoethnographic technique of the Willow Springs narrator, and its rewriting of *The Tempest, Mama Day* offers a sustained critique of the privileged mode of the contemporary anticonquest narrative: cultural relativism. Yet, in its attention to the problem of temporality, Naylor's novel adds an additional level of complexity, offering a model of sacred time that apparently grounds political autonomy in terms of cultural particularism. Even as the novel insists on the island as a contact zone, on a native culture coeval with the West and involved in active cross-cultural exchange, it constructs a temporal order alongside the linear time of Western history. In this temporal order the truth of the past is rhetorically constructed as immediate, complete, and radically impartial. The novel defines this temporal order as a sacred time linked to African spirituality and to cyclical rather than linear trajectories. The sacred time of African spirituality thus functions without the Western distinctions of past, present, and future (Richards 7).[11] In *Mama Day,* sacred time is accessible only to select members of the Day family. Moreover, it links this time to sacred spaces. In the family graveyard and in the family home, known in the novel tellingly as "the other place" (9), space and time are conflated as thoroughly as they are by Reema's Son. Yet the knowledge that abides in this time and space remains as unavailable to the Willow Springs narrator as it is to the Western ethnographer and the reader of *Mama Day.* By admitting and even celebrating a model of time and a mode of intracultural interpretation exclusive to the culture and to select members within it, *Mama Day* thus appears to confirm the particularist arguments so pervasive in scholarly analyses of the novel.[12]

One could convincingly argue, then, as do such critics as Tucker, Thompson, and Meisenhelder, that cultural particularism, as apparently dramatized in the novel's treatment of sacred time, ultimately counters the anticonquest narrative of cultural relativism by insisting on cultural authenticity. Such a reading, however, remains unsubstantiated in the larger context of the novel. For in *Mama Day,* sacred time exists in a dialectical tension with Western historical time and leads Willow Springs not to separatism but back to a recognition of the necessity of cross-cultural exchange. While access to the sacred time of the ancestor allows Mama Day to learn the means of curing Cocoa, and by extension the wounds of history, she also learns that she cannot save Cocoa without George, her husband from "beyond the bridge." For Cocoa's recovery and the future of the Day family line, Mama Day

> needs his hand in hers—his very hand—so she can connect it up with all the believing that had gone on before. A single moment was all she asked, even a fingertip to touch hers here at the other place. So together they could be the bridge for [Cocoa] to walk over. (285)

The future of Willow Springs as a community that can draw on the power of its ancestry requires the survival of Cocoa, which, by a curious and significant turn, requires the building of a bridge that joins Western culture and time to those of the African heritage. Just as the bridge to the mainland must be rebuilt, so the narrative links the future of Willow Springs inextricably to the traffic of cross-cultural exchange that travels across it in both directions. Sacred time thus serves as a bulwark against the forces of colonization threatened in cross-cultural exchange and, simultaneously, as a testimony to the ongoing process of the cultural exchange that defines it.

In *Mama Day,* sacred time, like cultural autonomy, is a construction of the contact zone, evidence of an already transcultural condition, a point emphasized in the genesis myth of Willow Springs itself. The island's myth of origins figures the birth of Willow Springs as a cross-racial union between African matriarch Sapphira and her one-time master, the "Norway-born" Bascombe Wade (5), a union that represents the beginning of time itself—the beginning, that is, of "the Days." The birth of the Day family is the beginning of time on the island. Hence the legendary Sapphira both ceases to bear children after her seventh child and gives the children the last name of Day. "God rested on the seventh day," the kinship chart asserts, "and so would she" (n. pag.). Through its account of its own genesis, the local community defines its birth as both a sacred and a historical event, expressive of the merger of two cultures and two temporal orders. Sacred time emerges as such only in contradistinction to a historical time born of cross-cultural exchange, an exchange figured in all of Willow Springs's legends as a power struggle between unevenly matched opponents. The creation myth of Willow Springs thus confirms cross-cultural exchange not only as a condition for existence but also as a struggle for political autonomy.

What, then, does *Mama Day* suggest about the problem of how a diasporic community manages that traffic in cross-cultural exchange, when it threatens the community's existence as a sovereign state? How is political autonomy protected in a context of necessary, inevitable, and threatening cross-cultural exchange? The answer, according to *Mama Day*, does not lie in the comforting ground of cultural authenticity or in an atavistic construction of racial memory. Refusing to embrace either a universalist or particularist epistemology, *Mama Day* insists that the answer is both provisional and political. Within the tempest of the political, collective identity may be manipulated strategically to address the historically specific demands of the moment. Thus, as a contact zone, the diasporic community of Willow Springs may never *be* indigenous, but it will necessarily *become* indigenous in the context of threats to its status as a sovereign state, which is to say that the community recognizes the political force of the notion of the "native" and its complex rhetorical construction. Just as the narrative of *Mama Day* moves strategically between a celebration and rejection of cultural relativism, so too, against a background of cross-cultural exchange between uneven powers, the community maneuvers its identity between the diasporic and the indigenous.

In *Routes*, James Clifford defines *diaspora* in terms that appear to speak directly to Naylor's fictional community of Willow Springs. The term *diaspora*, he writes, "is a signifier not simply of transnationality and movement but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement" (252).[13] As descendants of an African slave woman, Willow Springs can be seen as a "distinctive community" politically negotiated in its displacement from its African homeland. Moreover, in its critique and assumption of ethnographic authority, the narrative of *Mama Day* portrays a community that exists in what Clifford calls a "lived tension" between "experiences of separatism and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring another place" (255). In its critique of the imperialist appropriations latent in the rhetoric of cultural relativism, *Mama Day* oscillates between a celebration of entanglement and a valorization of separatism. On the one hand, the coevalness of the community and the transculturation inherent in its own self-definition point to the entanglements inherent in the local culture. On the other hand, in its construction of a sacred time that remembers and desires the "other place"—Africa—and distinguishes it from Western time and space, the community asserts a separatist ideology. In

Mama Day, the identity of Willow Springs as both entangled and separate represents a strategic response against threats to the community's political autonomy.

Yet, contrary to Clifford's definition of *diaspora,* Willow Springs does not understand itself as displaced for a temporary, if extended, period of time. Rather, even members of the Day family, with their accentuated connection to Sapphira Wade and her African heritage, see themselves as indigenous residents of the island. With the initiation of Cocoa, in fact, the object of "remembering/desiring" becomes Willow Springs itself. By the close of the novel, it is Willow Springs to which she is drawn from her home in Charleston, South Carolina. Cocoa, the privileged descendant of the Day line, thus locates the culture and community in Willow Springs and effectively renders both indigenous to the island itself. Her "rootedness in the land" represents, according to Clifford, "precisely what diasporic peoples have lost" (*Routes* 254).

The novel's commitment to both cross-cultural exchange and political autonomy collaborate to produce one of the novel's central metaphors: the bridge between Willow Springs and the mainland. Much of *Mama Day* revolves around the construction, destruction, and reconstruction of this bridge. The Willow Springs narrator tells the reader that, in times of crisis, when the island's political autonomy is threatened, the bridge must come down, stopping the traffic of cross-cultural exchange. So too, "the only thing that connects us to the mainland is a bridge—and that gotta be rebuilt after every big storm" (5). Not rebuilding the bridge is never an option. But reconstruction must always be carefully monitored; the bridge must be made of materials sanctioned by the local community. "We rebuild it ourselves when need be," the narrator declares, "and build it how we need it—strong enough to last till the next big wind" (5). Thus the bridge aptly figures the lived tension of this diasporic community between entanglement and separatism, between a hybrid identification and an indigenous one.

Conclusion: traveling genres

As its own intervention into contemporary ethnographic debates, *Mama Day* reveals cultural relativism as the privileged anticonquest narrative of its historical moment, the rhetoric by which a colonial power denies its hegemony even as it asserts it. Rather than merely provoking an epistemological crisis that jeopardizes ethnographic authority, the novel insists that cultural relativism persists as a political problem, a discourse that asserts an egalitarianism that its rhetorical construction belies. As it emerges in *Mama Day*, the specter of cultural relativism is the threat of a radical disempowerment discursively enacted. Hence the novel offers the peculiar plight of the autoethnography in terms of its strategic confirmation and disavowal of the relativist discourse. Like the bridge that connects Willow Springs to the mainland, cultural relativism remains a discursive construct that is as necessary for local survival as it is worthy of constant vigilance.

Yet, placing *Mama Day* in the context of the debates about the subject and object of ethnography makes visible not only the plight of the diasporic community under imperial eyes but also the plight of ethnography, its lived tension between science and fiction, impartial and partial truths. For in acknowledging the full impact of ethnography's status as a blurred genre, ethnographic metacriticism has allied itself with the diasporic. As *Writing Culture,* the anthology edited by Clifford and Marcus, attests, ethnography sees itself as irremediably hybrid, entangled with the literary and separate from it at different turns. Just as the community of Willow Springs builds its bridge to cross-cultural exchange, so does contemporary ethnography alternately transgress and redraw disciplinary boundaries. Where does contemporary ethnography dwell? To what disciplinary land is it rooted? Is it indigenous to the anthropological study of the modern field-worker or to the travelogue of the man of letters? Perhaps contemporary ethnography's enthusiasm for "traveling cultures," for contact zones and diasporic communities, reflects its own sense of displacement, its own struggle to resist the stasis and purity that have traditionally defined academic disciplines even as they have defined the objects of ethnographic study.

Notes

1. My reference here is to Clifford Geertz's classic 1974 defense of ethnographic authority, "From the Native's Point of View," written in the aftermath of the controversies that followed the publication of Bronislaw Malinowski's *Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term.* Geertz suggests that even if the preternatural empathy and scientific objectivism characterized in Malinowski's work had become an embarrassing illusion, the possibility remains that "construing sym-

bol systems" can still lead to something "like achieving communion" (70). For Geertz, anthropological understanding of the native's point of view thus continues to serve as the ground of ethnographic authority, a claim that Naylor's novel effectively problematizes as it offers the native's point of view of itself.

2. I am thinking here of the nexus of concerns represented by Seyla Benhabib's "Epistemologies of Postmodernism," Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic,* and Satya Mohanty's "Colonial Legacies." While Benhabib emphasizes the consequences of the refusal to engage in cross-cultural interpretation based on the irreducible differences between "traditional" and "modern" cultures, Gilroy and Mohanty trouble the equation of cultural difference with cultural particularism.

3. Clifford Geertz's influential essay "Blurred Genres" originally appeared in *The American Scholar* in 1980 and has since been widely anthologized. In this essay he observes a veritable sea change in thought in the social sciences: "[W]hat we are seeing," he writes, "is not just another redrawing of the cultural map—the moving of a few disputed borders, the marking of some more picturesque mountain lakes—but an alteration of the principles of mapping" (20). This means that the social sciences are becoming more like anthropology, the original hybrid. In a celebratory voice, Geertz asserts: "What Clyde Kluckhohn once said about anthropology—that it's an intellectual poaching license—not only seems more true now than when he said it, but true of a lot more than anthropology" (21). Rejecting the peculiar mode of humanism that enlivens Geertz's social thought, the generation of anthropological metacriticism represented by writers such as James Clifford and George Marcus seems a great deal more anxious about the status of the blurred genre. Unlike Geertz, Clifford and Marcus see the blurring of genres not only across social sciences but also, as the word *genre* itself implies, into the realm of the literary.

4. By *autoethnography,* I mean ethnography as seen and told from the native's point of view. The term is Mary Louise Pratt's. For a detailed definition see the introduction to her *Imperial Eyes* (7–9).

5. A great deal of critical attention has focused on the scene of oral storytelling enacted in the novel, particularly with respect to the African-American oral tradition. For the ways in which the reader as audience is specifically interpolated into the narrative of *Mama Day,* see Jocelyn Hazelwood Donlon's "Hearing Is Believing" and Roland Walter's "Dialectics."

6. A paradigmatic example would be Laura Bohannan's 1966 essay "Shakespeare in the Bush." Widely anthologized, this essay apparently embraces cultural relativism as a means of exposing the imperialism implicit in modern ethnography's universalist pretensions. It pits an elitist particularism against a

democratically inspired universalism and mocks both, as the West African elders revise the "particulars" of the "universal" *Hamlet* so thoroughly as to make it unrecognizable. Yet, in its final insistence that the elders reveal the same will to universalism as the patronizing Western ethnographer, the essay inadvertently problematizes the very relativism that it celebrates. At the essay's close, relativism wins the day, but equality does not. While the Western ethnographer and reader are enlightened about the failures of the universalist paradigm, the Africans remain in the dark.

It is worth noting that Bohannan exploits the links between fiction and ethnography not only in this essay but also in her larger works. In addition to ethnographic work on the Tiv, Bohannan wrote *Return to Laughter,* a novel addressing similar subject matter. The professional anxiety attending such generic transgressions may be registered in the fact that she chose to publish her novel under a pseudonym, Eleanor Bowen Smith.

7. For a study that locates the historical sources of *The Tempest* in the conquest of the New World, see Ronald Takaki's "'The Tempest' in the Wilderness."

8. The ambivalence of *The Tempest* is, perhaps, what has rendered it such a controversial text in contemporary debates. In their *Case Study in Critical Controversy,* Gerald Graff and James Phelan underscore not only the academic debates about the ideological implications of the text but also its role in the "canon wars" of the 1990s. In response to Lynne Cheney's highly contested appointment as chair of the NEH, George Will and Stephen Greenblatt stage their public dispute about the value of art in essays centered specifically on how to read *The Tempest.*

9. Recent criticism has revealed the many ways Naylor's revision of *The Tempest* joins this tradition of anticolonial discourse, bringing challenges to the Western canon and to the gender definitions upon which colonial discourse instantiates its power. Valerie Traub's reading is exemplary in this respect. She suggests that the novel's treatment of *The Tempest* emphasizes the plight of women in the context of colonialism. According to Traub, "the cultural paradox of Caliban's curse," his struggle for self-representation in the language of his master, becomes, in Naylor's text, "the question facing black women writers" today (151). Additional studies that focus on the novel's use of *The Tempest* in terms of gender critique include those by Peter Erickson, Gary Storhoff, and Missy Dehn Kubitschek.

10. Lindsey Tucker rightly identifies Mama Day with the long African and African-American tradition of "conjure women." Indeed, Mama Day's powers address the three types of illnesses Tucker sees as the traditional concern of conjure:

> (1) natural illnesses for which a knowledge of roots, herbs, barks, and teas is applied; (2) so-called occult, or spiritually connected, illnesses which require spell casting and charms; and (3) illnesses which include both personal and collective calamities that are not the result of malevolent practices. (147)

11. Dorothy Perry Thompson notes the relevance of Richards's work to Naylor's novel. She argues that Sapphira "defies Western temporality" through the powers of African necromancy and that the practice of "ancestor communion" serves a similar, if more restorative, process ("Africana" 94). This ancestor communion is precisely the mode of communication and interpretation most coveted by the ethnographer and most clearly denied to him.

12. Such a position finds suggestive evidence in the novel. Access to a non-Western sacred time in *Mama Day* is primarily the privilege of the novel's title character, whose supernatural powers include the ability to read signs that unveil both the future and the past. In a "drop of vapor" that "beads up on the tip of an apricot leaf and shines in the morning sun" (34), for example, Mama Day perceives that her grandniece Cocoa will arrive in Willow Springs one day before her scheduled visit. And in the "bloated yellow [that] swims in the thick mucous" (44) of broken eggs, she sees a neighbor's coming months of infertility. Mama Day's access to the future, the novel reveals, is the result of her access to the voices of the past, which are also the source of her powers to heal and protect. In the woods that surround the grave of Bascombe Wade, the slaveholder who loved Sapphira and deeded Willow Springs to her descendants, Mama Day hears the "humming of some lost and ancient song" (118) that reveals to her the origins of the Candle Walk ritual. Similarly, at the abandoned family home, the "other place," she uncovers the sealed well in which the painful past of the Day family abides. As she pries the well open, she hears the painful past erupt: "Circles and circles of screaming. Once, twice, three times peace was lost at that well" (284). Hearing the voices from the past and looking "past the . . . pain," she is able to learn the only way to cure her ailing grandniece. Yet it is also at the mouth of the well that the pain of the past voices itself, linking Cocoa's illness to a history of family pain and her cure to a healing of historical proportions.

13. Clifford's work on diaspora draws significantly on Paul Gilroy, who influentially problematized particularist arguments for racial identity in *The Black Atlantic.*

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Mason & Dixon & the Ampersand

Samuel Cohen

> "It goes back," he might have begun, "to the second Day of Creation, when 'G-d made the Firmament, from the waters which were under the Firmament,'—thus the first Boundary Line. All else after that, in all History, is but Sub-Division."
>
> —Mr. Edgewise (*Mason & Dixon* 360–61)

> And wherever you may stand, given the Convexity, each of you is slightly *pointed away* from everybody else. . . . Here in the Earth Concave, everyone is pointed *at* everyone else,—ev'rybody's axes converge,—forc'd at least thus to acknowledge one another,—an entirely different set of rules for how to behave.
>
> —Resident of Terra Concava (*Mason & Dixon* 741)

> for the Times are as impossible to calculate, this Advent, as the Distance to a Star.
>
> —Rev. Wicks Cherrycoke (*Mason & Dixon* 6)

The story goes that Thomas Pynchon was heavily involved in the graphic design of his 1997 novel *Mason & Dixon*, inside and out. In particular, he is said to have been involved in the making of the novel's cover (Mxyzptlk). The dust jacket comes in two parts, a paper jacket and a transparent overlay. The paper jacket features the title, in an eighteenth-century-looking typeface, magnified and spread across the front and back. On the front of the transparent overlay are the more legibly sized author name and title running across the top and bottom. It is a distinctive design, but it may also serve a purpose other than marketing. Without making too much of something as (by definition) superficial as cover design,

Twentieth-Century Literature 48.3 Fall 2002 264

we are given space to think about its significance by the fact of Pynchon's attention to its details. One particular detail that I believe is significant results from the way in which the title is expanded and placed—the ampersand that fills the space between author name and title. In effect, the centrally placed ampersand is magnified to the point that it moves from the background to become the central element, more illustration than typography.

The emphasis on the ampersand is likely no accident, because it points to what I will argue is a central idea in the book, one that is essential to its vision and so, also, to its difference from its author's earlier works. *Mason & Dixon*'s ampersand is more than historically accurate; it expresses the shift in Pynchon's thinking that the novel represents. As he spins a picaresque historical tale in *Mason & Dixon*, Pynchon also tells a new, more hopeful story about America, emphasizing relation, connection, and possibility. At the center of this new story is the ampersand.

§

Mason & Dixon is in many ways a novel about lines. It is the story of Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, astronomer and surveyor, who from 1763 to 1767 were in charge of drawing and blazing the 233-mile latitudinal line dividing the Penns' Pennsylvania and Lord Calvert's Maryland, the line that later came to divide North from South, free states from slave. The novel follows them, in part 1, "Latitudes and Departures," from their meeting in 1760, when they travel to Cape Town to observe the Transit of Venus between the earth and the sun and help determine the Solar Parallax, to Mason's side trip to St. Helena for further measurement, to their return to London, and finally, in part 2, "America," to their acceptance and execution of a commission to chart the disputed southern border of Pennsylvania. The novel ends in part 3, "Last Transit," with their return to England, Dixon's death, and Mason's eventual relocation to America. The tale is told by the Rev. Wicks Cherrycoke, who was a member of the expedition and who has come to stay (and stay and stay) with family on the occasion of Mason's demise in 1786. Mason, as astronomer, and Dixon, as surveyor, are professionally dedicated to the measuring, charting, and drawing of lines. The task that occupies the majority of their time in the novel is to plot and cut an 8-yard-wide line.

But this is only the first and most obvious way in which *Mason & Dixon* is about lines. Pynchon's telling of their story and the story of pre-Revolutionary America contains many kinds of lines, as do the larger contexts within which the story is set. To argue for the ampersand's place as an important figure in the novel, I will first sketch the ways in which the novel is so marked, the ways in which Pynchon understands these stories and their contexts in terms of the metaphor of the line. This metaphor has thus far understandably dominated the novel's reception by reviewers and critics. It is, after all, the word most closely associated with the names of the title characters, in the name given the swath they cut (a name only given, interestingly, long after they created it, and never in the novel itself). I will first read *Mason & Dixon* in this way because it is has been the dominant reading in the few years since its publication, with good reason, and because it is in relation to Pynchon's use of the line that his use of the ampersand makes sense, and, ultimately, vice versa. The ways in which the ampersand responds to the line, the ways in which connection and possibility answer division and difference, make *Mason & Dixon* something truly new for Pynchon.

§

Even before the two title characters receive their assignment in the colonies, *Mason & Dixon* is filled with geometry. The first sentence of the novel begins: "Snow-Balls have flown their arcs" (5). The phrase seems a humorous allusion to the opening of *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), "A screaming comes across the sky" (3). There is of course a bathetic drop from the latter to the former, or perhaps an ostensible lightening not just of mood but also of stakes. As becomes clear once the book gets rolling, though, Pynchon brings the reader past or more exactly through the playful and apparently (mostly) accurate eighteenth-century English of his narrator and other characters, and his almost compulsive punning, to arrive at the serious ideas he explores in the novel.[1] While he is clearly being playful—a mood hardly new for his work—and may be establishing a warmer tone than exists in his earlier work, Pynchon is certainly from the start creating a serious world. It is also, from the start, a geometrical world.

As has been noted by many readers, Pynchon's big novels have all had central geometric figures, which are even referred to in their titles:

V. (1963) has the chevron, *Gravity's Rainbow* has the parabola, and *Mason & Dixon* has the line. From the arc of the snowball to the Transit of Venus and the Solar Parallax to the equator Mason and Dixon cross in their travels to chart these celestial phenomena, the world of the novel is from its beginning crossed by these straight lines, curved along hemispheres or orbits.

An important aspect of this crisscrossing in the novel is that the lines do not in one sense exist independently of the astronomers and surveyors who chart them and so, in effect, create them. Geometry exists in the abstract, as do laws of gravity and movement; all are assumed to be independent in their own right. However, in their embodiment in concrete, particular instances, they depend on people believing in them, understanding them, and applying them. From particular positions and with precision instruments, Mason and Dixon are able not just to chart the movement of heavenly bodies but also to divide the earth by degrees, to establish where every part of the earth is in relation to every other part, but their ability depends in the end on their belief. Their ability, therefore, provides an apt metaphor for their times. In a nascent America, a creation of the Enlightenment, their applications of science to government, of rationality to the wilderness, embody the claims of the Age of Reason. While the drawing of the line is on a (literally) mundane level, mere surveying and cutting (as the unhappy, stargazing astronomer Mason sometimes sees it), it depends on a belief in the human ability to domesticate the natural.

One important context for the story of this line, then, is the story of the Enlightenment. Pynchon's telling of it is less celebratory than the traditional version and more nuanced than the usual revision. One way to think about Pynchon's version is, conveniently, in terms of lines. The understanding of the Enlightenment that in the twentieth century came under attack saw the eighteenth century as the time, in Kant's words, of "man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity," as a time when reason reigned supreme, and when, as a result, civilization built up a great, improving head of steam called progress. Fundamental to this story are at least two kinds of lines. First is the line of progress, the inexorably upward-moving line charting intellectual, social, and material improvement. The second kind consists of the lines drawn between concrete things and people. There are the lines of classification and division with which Western science understands the world. These are the lines between the enlightened and the unenlightened, the civilized and the uncivilized, the included and the excluded—and those drawn between abstract ideas—the provable and the unprovable, the rational and the mystical, fact and fiction. The Enlightenment, not just in its intellectual projects—Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, Johnson's dictionary, Linnaeus's taxonomy—but also in its revolutions, French and American, and its imperial and colonial manifestations, depended on and in fact championed the drawing and maintaining of lines. The upward-tending line of progress, then, depended on the drawing of lines of division. As this kind of "progress" continues to be made, this story of the Enlightenment continues to be told.

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer told a different story in the middle of the last century. In their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, they argue that what has been called Enlightenment and hailed as progress in fact led to the gas chambers. With roots in Marx and Nietzsche, Adorno and Horkheimer and others in and outside of the Frankfurt School saw the belief in human mastery through reason and attempts to impose it on the universe, or "instrumental reason," as the root of the miseries of their contemporary world, miseries that they could not cite as evidence of progress. As Walter Benjamin (also associated with the Frankfurt School) wrote in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History," "There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (*Illuminations* 256). Earlier, Max Weber had told his own version of this story, noting that the classification of the natural world and organization of the human world, what he called the "rationalization" of the world, in effect "disenchanted" it. By drawing lines across experience, Weber argued, the Enlightenment project of understanding and domesticating the world had the unfortunate effect of robbing it of its magic.

Both versions of this story, the traditional and the revised, are recognizable in *Mason & Dixon*. The question of what to think of these ideas follows closely behind, carried most prominently in the question of what to think of the line, or "visto," but present also in many of the novel's factual and fantastic, tangential and strangely germane subplots, incidents, and mysteries. However this question is raised, at stake ultimately is the value of the drawing of lines, and all that this action comes to symbolize in the novel, including not only division and classification of the natural and social worlds but also the rationalization of space and time. A focus on the line as the dominant figure in the novel can lead to a reading of Pynchon as squarely on the side of Adorno, Horkheimer, and others in condemning the Enlightenment as the cause of many modern ills. This condemnation would square with the readings many have made of *V.* and *Gravity's Rainbow* as depicting worlds disfigured by science and modernity. Reading *Mason & Dixon* only through the figure of the line yields this same reading, as I will show first. Reading it through both the line and the ampersand, however, complicates things. A thorough condemnation of the period in which he sets this novel is not, I will argue, what Pynchon is making.

As Mason and Dixon progress westward in their cutting of the visto, into the unsettled yet not unpopulated frontier and away from the fast-dividing East, the significance of the visto as embodiment of the Enlightenment is raised in stark relief. Among the more direct ways is the opposition of the Chinese *feng shui* expert Captain Zhang, who, upon learning of their project, asks Mason and Dixon, "you two crazy?" He continues:

> Ev'rywhere else on earth, Boundaries follow Nature,—coast-lines, ridge-tops, river-banks,—so honoring the Dragon or Shan within, from which Land-Scape ever takes its form. To mark a right Line upon the Earth is to inflict upon the Dragon's very Flesh, a sword-slash, a long, perfect scar, impossible for any who live out here the year 'round to see as other than hateful Assault. (542)

Zhang recognizes the brutal, incongruous regularity of the line as an attack on the very nature of things. The Dragon within the earth is dishonored and wounded by the incising of a right line into its flesh, into the living flesh of nature. The Enlightenment roots of the line are here expressly criticized from a non-Western perspective.

Zhang's criticisms go beyond the nature of the line itself to a more pointed indictment of its effects. He asks, "Shall wise Doctors one day write History's assessment of the Good resulting from this Line, vis-à-vis the not-so-good? I wonder which list would be longer" (666) and later characterizes the line as a "conduit for Evil" (701). The list enumerating the not-so-good effects of the visto—and of the other lines it comes to represent—can be drawn from many parts of the novel. Lines to which our attention is drawn include those between black and white, which we encounter early in Cape Town, later in the colonies, and in the backs of our minds whenever we remember what the Mason-Dixon line came to divide; the related line between Native Americans and the settlers and colonists who pushed them westward; that between Old World and New, between hoary, tradition-bound Europe and the New Eden of America, which the founding-fathers-to-be and would-be Adams into whom Mason and Dixon run are intent on fixing; the line between those included in this new paradise and those excluded; the line between Elect and Preterite, Saved and Damned; the line between the empirically known and the possible unknown, what the novel calls the indicative and the subjunctive, the former of which they set out from in the form of the governed, measured world of bureaucratic administration, and the latter of which they quickly emerge into in the form of talking dogs, amorous mechanical ducks, the 11 lost days created by the switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendars, the race that lives on the inside of the earth, the ghost of Mason's wife, and many other fantastic yet plausibly presented phenomena; and the line between fact and fiction, history and romance in eighteenth-century terms, a line highlighted by the form of the novel itself, which takes the strands of actual historical events and weaves fiction from them.

Each of these lines can be read as Zhang reads the visto, as conduits for evil. The line between black and white is first examined during Mason and Dixon's stay in the Cape Town home of the Vrooms, where Mason is recruited to impregnate one of the family's slaves to help produce light-skinned stock. It reappears most plainly for them in America, prompting Dixon at one point to say:

> —and now here we are again, in another Colony, this time having drawn them a line between their Slave-Keepers, and their Wage-Payers, as if doom'd to re-encounter thro' the World this public Secret, this shameful Core. . . . Christ Mason . . . Where does it end? No matter where in it we go, shall we find all the World Tyrants and Slaves? America was the one place we should not have found them. (692–93)

Finding all the world tyrants and slaves means uncovering a shameful secret, a concealed truth of the Enlightenment world, namely that freedom is reserved only for some. Even an incipient America, a land soon to proclaim all men equal, hides this truth, and not very well. Near the end of their time in America, Dixon tears the whip from the hand of a slave driver busy beating his property, whom Dixon frees. The act is clearly heroic, and a judgment of the place in which it occurs. This line between black and white is most clearly represented by one significance of the visto that, because of chronology, can never be made quite explicit within the novel: as the popularly designated divider of Union from Rebel states in the Civil War. The absence from the novel of the name by which the line came to be known underscores this implicit knowledge.

The ill effects of the line drawn between Native Americans and colonists become clear as Mason and Dixon and their party progress westward. But it is not just a phenomenon of the frontier. Long before they stop the line rather than cross the Great Warrior Path—the crossing of which, their new Mohawk companions inform them (through a translator), "would be like putting an earthen Dam across a River"—the presence of natives and the effects of contact are clear. The division of Indian from settler was enforced from the moment of settlement, a fact to which Mason and Dixon's visit to Lancaster alludes (647). They are there to inspect the site on which an Indian massacre occurred the year before; however, as Cherrycoke mentions when explaining why Mason did not go alone as originally intended, Lancaster, the location of more than one Indian fight, is "a Town notorious for Atrocity" (341). Among the more notorious is the 1676 Indian attack on Lancaster, which took place during Metacom's or King Philip's War. While the hanging of three Indians for the murder of another, converted Indian was the proximate cause of the war (still the most devastating, in terms of fatalities as percentage of population, in American history), the real cause was the encroachment of the settlers. The attack gained fame in America and especially in Britain from a book published as *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (in England, *A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*). A first-person narrative of Rowlandson's captivity, it provides a historical record of Puritan attitudes toward the Indians, including both the missionaries' desire to convert them and the belief of Rowlandson and others that the natives were a race of unredeemable savages. Rowlandson's book helped win the day, and many subsequent years of American history, for her racial attitudes.

Pynchon's allusion, then, is to a long history of American attitudes toward its original inhabitants, attitudes that led to results such as those of Metacom's War, which killed 40 percent of the local Indian population. This line is related, like all the others in this book, to one that many Americans were intent on fixing: between themselves and Europe, the

Old World and the New. This line appears behind much of the intrigue and paranoia Mason and Dixon encounter on their arrival on America's shores, in the street and in coffee houses, conspiracies and plots they first hear of from Benjamin Franklin, who they meet in a drugstore running a brisk trade in opium, and then from a Colonel George Washington, between puffs from his hemp pipe. Like the plotting they have encountered and imagined in their earlier travels, these plots depend on division, on nations and factions; this line in particular, though, is one many Americans are soon to draw in indelible ink. The line between America and not-America, that which it will leave behind and that which it will exclude, has, like the line drawn between slave states and free, old roots. Of these shared roots, Tony Tanner writes:

> "North and South" is just one more example of the pernicious binary habit of thought, which Pynchon sees as having been so disastrous for America. He traces it back to the Puritan division—or line of demarcation—between the Elect and the Preterite, the Saved and the Damned, Us and Them.
> (*American Mystery* 288–89)

The significance of the Revolutionary line, like that of the line between Pennsylvania and Maryland, is one more example of what Tanner rightly identifies as binary thought, a phenomenon Pynchon has spent much time anatomizing elsewhere. Here it is the delineation of a New Eden; everything else is without, unsaved. The line between the elect and the damned preoccupied the Calvinist-descended early settlers, whose anxiety led them in their lay doctrine to work around predestination by sneaking the doctrines of work and faith back in under cover of signs of election. Their profound anxiety found some release, then, in works, faith, close attention to who would receive grace, and attempts to define their earthly version of paradise as open to those who could call themselves the English, as they referred to themselves, as us versus the various thems outside. The scrutiny on identity defined by group membership and the defensive stance against the external continue, 100 years later, to shape attitudes about nation, religion, race, and countless other arenas in which lines of exclusion could be drawn.

The line Mason and Dixon draw, then, shares two things with the line America draws both around itself and against those within its borders it would rather were without: an inheritance and an essential structure. Also related to the line that defines America is a line that appears and reappears throughout *Mason & Dixon,* a line that also can claim a long descent: that between what Pynchon calls the indicative and the subjunctive. This line is not so much grammatical as metaphysical, though the deep connection of the former to the latter is noted in the borrowing of terms: it distinguishes between what we can say "is" and what "might be." The connection of the American line to this line between what is and what might be—of America's self-definition and differentiation to the line between the known and the possible—is best seen in a passage set, fittingly, during the visit to Lancaster:

> Does Britannia, when she sleeps, dream? Is America her dream?—in which all that cannot pass in the metropolitan Wakefulness is allow'd Expression away in the restless Slumber of those Provinces, and on West-ward, wherever 'tis not yet mapp'd, nor written down, nor ever, by the majority of Mankind, seen,—serving as a very Rubbish-Tip for subjunctive Hopes, for all that *may yet be true,*—Earthly Paradise, Fountain of Youth, Realms of Prester John, Christ's Kingdom, ever behind the sunset, safe till the next Territory to the West be seen and recorded, measur'd and tied in, back into the Net-Work of Points already known, that slowly triangulates its way into the continent, changing all from subjunctive to declarative, reducing Possibilities to Simplicities that serve the ends of Governments,—winning away from the realm of the Sacred, its Borderlands one by one, and assuming them unto the bare mortal World that is our home, and our Despair. (345)

America as possibility—as the New World, as the place that allows what Europe cannot—is the dream of the Old World, and like a dream it is not true, but might be. But although it is Britain's dream, America keeps awakening itself, as it turns frontier into settlement into colony, curtailing its possibility, consigning hopes to its rubbish heap. The western frontier was only seemingly boundless. As long as it seemed so, America could be the place where the West in the larger sense could escape the Enlightenment reduction of possibility. When the western frontier's apparent boundlessness was revealed as only ostensible—when lines were measured and laid down across it, disproving its infiniteness—this escape route was cut off. Mason and Dixon run into a number of examples of the subjunctive, both before they begin their line and as they blaze it across the frontier, discovering what would seem impossible and its near-simultaneous disappearance or destruction—its absorption into the bare, mortal world. When anything seems possible, the Enlightenment certainties, it seems, reassert themselves.

In their travels, Mason and Dixon come across, among many other unlikely phenomena, a talking dog, a flying mechanical duck with a crush on an unwilling French chef, a giant cheese, the ghost of Mason's late wife, and a race of people living inside the earth. Each of these exceeds the conditions of Enlightenment understanding, as does Mason's experience of the 11 days "lost" when the calendar was switched from the Julian to the Gregorian in the "Schizochronick" (192) year of 1752:

> 'Twas as if this Metropolis of British Reason had been abandon'd to the Occupancy of all that Reason would deny. Malevolent shapes flowing in the streets. Lanthorns spontaneously going out. Men roaring, as if chang'd to Beasts in the Dark. A Carnival of Fear. Shall I admit it? I thrill'd. I felt that if I ran fast enough, I could gain altitude, and fly. (559–60)

The occupancy of America by all that reason would deny dramatizes its status as the land of possibility. The loss of these phenomena, their eviction, dramatizes the loss of this possibility. Dixon's visit to Hollow Earth makes plain that it is eviction:

> "Once the solar parallax is known," they told me, "once the necessary Degrees are measur'd, and the size and weight and shape of the Earth are calculated inescapably at last, all this will vanish. We will have to seek another Space." (741)

Even though we know such a world could not exist, we still feel its impending loss; it as if the loss of possibility is doubled.

The line between subjunctive and indicative, then, is crucial both to the book's understanding of the Enlightenment—as the demarcation between what the Enlightenment can know and what it cannot, and so between what is and is not—and also to its understanding of America, as the demarcation between what America might be and what it can no longer be. The visto Mason and Dixon draw, as it cuts through America, is the vehicle through which the novel encounters the ways America is built on lines, and, more importantly, through which it—and we—are able to think about how America became marked by these old lines when at first it seemed open and unlimited. It was one place we should not have found them. The disenchantment of America, the turning of the New World into just another part of the Old, is the turning of subjunctive into indicative.

The fate of the Indians illustrates this aspect of the line. In the end, the mysteries of their world, while given a reprieve by Mason and Dixon's party, seem surely doomed. Mason and Dixon turn back East, giving up the visto, when they reach the Great Warrior Path, an ancient North-South road reported to have a power that science does not recognize. They learn of the Path from Hugh Crawfford, the white man who accompanies the band of Indians that joins them toward the end of their journey. He tells them that it is sacred, and that they will not be allowed to pass. At this point drawing the line becomes fraught with tension, as they do not want to stumble upon the Path and have only an inexact idea how far they are from it, because they do not know its precise location, and because, as Crawfford says, "Distance is not the same here, nor is Time" (647). Out in this still unmeasured wilderness, occupied by the Indians with their unenlightened worldview, the impossible is still possible, and the laws of Western science may not apply:

> We all feel it Looming, even when we're awake, out there ahead someplace, the way you come to feel a River or Creek ahead, before anything else,—sound, sky, vegetation,—may have announced it. Perhaps 'tis the very deep sub-audible Hum of its Traffic that we feel with an equally undiscover'd part of the Sensorium,—does it lie but over the next Ridge? the one after that? We have Mileage Estimates from Rangers and Runners, yet for as long as its Distance from the Post Mark'd West remains unmeasur'd, nor is yet recorded as Fact, may it remain, a-shimmer, among the few final Pages of its Life as Fiction. (650)

As Cherrycoke notes when they reach the Path, the frontier is "the Membrane that divides their [Indians'] Subjunctive World from our number'd and dreamless Indicative" (677). As soon as they come to the Path, as soon as they are able to fix it in latitude and longitude, the dream will be over, it will be Fact. Like the Hollow Earth, it will cease to exist. Again, applying geometry is, in Michael Wood's words, an "imperialist gesture, an administrative onslaught by the numbered on the unimagined" (128). The unimagined, when seen and counted, must by definition cease to exist as such.

As do the Indians, at least the way they were, untouched by the Old World. When the party finally reaches the line, Mason wants to continue, thinking that the Indians who travel the path and live beyond it will not threaten them once they see that they are harmless. Dixon, on the other hand, wants to stop:

> They don't want nay of thah'? They want to know how to stop this great invisible Thing that comes crawling straight over their Lands, devouring all in its Path. . . . A tree-slaughtering Animal, with no purpose but to continue creating forever a perfect Corridor over the Land. Its teeth of steel,—its Jaws, Axmen,—its Life's Blood, Disbursement. And what of its intentions, beyond killing ev'rything due west of it? do you know? I don't either. (678)

After some disagreement, the line is ended, and the party turns back, but the Indians by whose war parties they are surrounded at the end will not be able to turn back those who sent Mason and Dixon.

The unlimited possibility of America, of the New Eden, the land not just of the free but the equal, will not survive either. As is seen in the novel's frame, Wicks Cherrycoke's 1786 telling of the story of Mason and Dixon, its great promise will not be met. He says, "This Christmastide of 1786, with the War settl'd and the Nation bickering itself into Fragments, wounds bodily and ghostly, great and small, go aching on, not ev'ry one commemorated,—nor, too often, even recounted" (6). After the American Revolution, we see the failure of this promise, and this failure is seen specifically to take the shape of lines. The fragments into which the nation is dividing, the wounds that go aching on, existed long before the revolution, as Cherrycoke's story illustrates. Though he is not recounting the story of the contemporary wounds, the story Cherrycoke does tell clearly applies. The American mania for drawing lines, and for thinking them progress, is not specific to the 1760s.

Nor is it specific to the eighteenth century. Pynchon is reading not just a historical moment but also all of American history. The drawing of lines that characterizes the birth of the nation is explicitly linked to a more recent time, 100 years after the time of *Mason & Dixon*. The Civil War was another moment when the various lines dividing the country were contested. The racial lines drawn at America's birth remained, despite military, legal, and social efforts to erase them, and just as they persisted through Reconstruction and resurfaced in Jim Crow, Pynchon seems to believe, these lines are still evident today. His concern for racial prejudice and systemic discrimination can be seen in his novels, his early short fiction, such as "The Secret Integration" (1964), and even his nonfiction, such as his 1965 essay in the *New York Times Magazine*, "A Journey into the Mind of Watts." We are thus led to ask how the century of *Mason & Dixon*'s writing fits into this pattern of Pynchon's, how in the second half of the twentieth century we see possibility raised and unrealized. How does the tendency to draw lines, the binary habit of thought seen as dominating American history, exist in our time? To address this question, we need to go beyond a reading of *Mason & Dixon* solely as a novel of lines, as a reckoning of the costs of America's addiction to binarism. To do this, to get at other ways of thinking and being that *Mason & Dixon* might entertain, we have to focus on the other figure that dominates the novel.

§

The ampersand is an ancient Roman symbol derived from the ligature or combination into one character of the *e* and *t* in the Latin *et,* meaning *and.* In modern English usage, it continues to serve as shorthand for *and.* Its English name is a corruption of the words English schoolchildren used to recite at the end of the alphabet: "X, Y, Zed, and per se and." The last phrase refers to the ampersand character, which is per se (by itself) the word *and,* and which came to be pronounced "ampersand." Modern typefaces have variations on the ampersand in which the original *e* and *t* have become lost. Eighteenth-century typefaces, such as William Caslon's, preserved the distinction between the two letters, linking them only at the end of the second, bottom stroke of the cursive capital *E* and the *t*. The ampersand on the cover of *Mason & Dixon* is Caslon's.

Pynchon's choice of this variation of the character is worth noting because of its symbolic importance to the novel. A character whose meaning is equal to *and,* it is not, however, *and* itself. It is a character that means "and" but which has a physical form and a name that can both be read to express certain ideas of and-ness. The ligature of the two letters expresses combination, connection, while the separate recognizability of the letters in the eighteenth-century version expresses the preservation of distinct identities, of difference. The name, which again literally means that the character itself means "and," conveys both by itselfness and its opposite—because the ampersand is not *and* itself but rather is joined to *and* as signifier to signified, so that when we see it we think "and." In other words, the name of the ampersand holds the same potentially paradoxical meaning as its form, namely, the simultaneous coexistence of the ideas of distinctness and unity, of difference and individual identity. This meaning is paradoxical, though, only if it is assumed that such a thing is impossible.

As I have tried to show, *Mason & Dixon* can be read as a book about the destructive prevalence of the setting up and maintaining of binary difference in American history. But from the choices made on its cover to the story told on its pages, it is also a book about the possibility of connection, relation, simultaneity, about possibility itself, about the ideas expressed in the character that dominates its cover. A good place to start examining these ideas would be this first expression of them, paying attention not just to the particulars of the character itself but also to the immediate context in which it appears, the title, between the names of the novel's heroes.

The binary created in the title could be said to capture the geometric form of the line, since what is emphasized is the line between the two names, the distinction between the characters. But by using the ampersand rather than the word *and,* Pynchon expresses something else: the connection between these two distinct characters, just like that between the *e* and *t* from which the ampersand derives. The differences between the two men are clear from the start. Mason is a top-flight astronomer from the south of England, a deistic Anglican. Dixon is a surveyor, a Geordie, a Quaker. Temperamentally, they are also quite different: one attuned to mystical possibility, the other a good Enlightenment rationalist; one reserved, one loud and convivial; one a wine man, the other fonder of beer. However, as many reviewers noted, these differences do not drive them apart. Joined by circumstance, they become an instance of "the classic comedy team of straight man and flake" (Boyle), and the novel becomes "a buddy story" (Menand 24) "like *Huckleberry Finn*, like *Ulysses* . . . one of the great novels about male friendship in anybody's literature" (Leonard 68).

The relationship between these two is one element of *Mason & Dixon* that makes it new in Pynchon's corpus. It is generally accepted that *V.*, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), *Gravity's Rainbow*, and *Vineland* (1984) are not marked by the creation of and attention to fully rounded characters. As one review of *Gravity's Rainbow* put it, "Pynchon doesn't create characters so much as mechanical men to whom a manic comic impulse or vague free-floating anguish can attach itself, often in brilliant streams of consciousness" (Locke 12). This reviewer finds the absence of more typically novelistic characters appropriate to the worlds their author creates in his fiction, worlds in which only mechanical men have a place: "In Pynchon's world there is almost no trust, no human nurture, no mutual support, no family life" (12). This characterization of Pynchon's fictional worlds is also generally accepted: though there is much humor in the novels, and much attention to the prevalence of human indecency and unkindness, there is not much warmth. Though some demur, Pynchon's work up until *Mason & Dixon* has been largely seen as relatively cold; in its attention to large ideas, national and international histories of ideas and systems, and in its painting pictures of the world as a place riven by conspiracy or suspicions thereof, his work has had neither the time nor the inclination to present round, sympathetic, engaging characters.[2]

Mason & Dixon has been widely seen to have a warmth lacking in these earlier works, and this perception is due in large part to the way Pynchon draws these two men, separately and together. The stories of their lives before and after their partnership create sympathy for them as individuals, and their story together—stumbling across America, completing a task whose meaning dawns slowly upon them, and supporting each other as it does—creates sympathy for them as a pair. As Michael Wood writes, we see them

> arguing, Anglican against Quaker, mystic against rationalist, and finally discovering that their need and respect for each other, in spite of the frequent acidity of their exchanges and their constant mutual fending off of real intimacies, the drawing of a sort of line between Mason and Dixon, add up to a form of passion, indeed the central passion and care of their lives. (124)

The line between them, the binary expectation set up by the juxtaposition of their names and the difference in their characters, becomes instead a connection, a relationship between two men who still remain distinct.

The possibility of connection across difference, illustrated in the relationship between these two men, is an important subject of *Mason & Dixon*. It is a possibility that applies not just to the main characters but also to America, not just to the line drawn between these two people or any two people but also to the lines drawn between kinds of people, between aspects of experience, between times and places and ideas, between what is and what might be. What Pynchon sees in the relationship between Mason and Dixon, he sees in American history, and what he sees in American history, he sees in the American present: not just the age-old fact of division but also the possibility of something else.

The relationship between Mason and Dixon is important because they connect across their difference. Just as their differences make for the texture of their bickering and, in the end, their friendship, so the division, rather than deserving only condemnation, is valued positively for making the connection possible. For the novel as a whole, then, lines are not simply to be condemned. They make possible many things, including the existence of connections across them.

Without lines, we would have a world without difference. And in some ways we are moving closer to such a world all the time. Louis Menand sees *Mason & Dixon* as a novel about colonialism and an adaptation of Pynchon's favorite multidisciplinary metaphor, entropy. He calls the novel an American *Tristes Tropiques* because Pynchon seems to be practicing an anthropology like that of Levi-Strauss, which Menand says might as well be called "entropology" because it sees history as the process of increasing homogenization through contact (24). Homogenization—a world without lines—is not for Pynchon a victory over division but a defeat of energy, of motion, of change. It is also, in the process by which it occurs, a victory for cruelty.

Seeing the American frontier as Britannia's dream, as the place where it seemed that the impossible might be possible, Pynchon explores the simultaneous opening up and shutting down of possibility that America as frontier came to represent and that the Mason-Dixon line symbolizes. As they travel westward, Mason and Dixon encounter the fantastic possibility of America beyond the New Eden of the New American Adam, the mysterious, mystical world both excluded and in a way created by the Enlightenment. As they encounter it, though, the line they blaze into the heart of this frightening and wonderful darkness brings a harmful light. Thus the moment of expansion is at the same time the moment of contraction, when that not normally seen is glimpsed and quickly domesticated. When Pynchon entertains us with tales of the impossible, and in so doing laments its loss, he might seem to be resigned to this inevitable process, as we all must be resigned to the final loss of possibility that ends the book, the deaths of its heroes. What happens in the fantastic lives of Mason and Dixon and in the fantastic life of America might seem inevitable, as might the cruelty that sometimes results from America's old binarism.

This sense of the inevitable—that people die, that cultural entropy occurs, that bad things happen to good people for no good reason—is undeniably part of *Mason & Dixon*. And the movement in *Mason & Dixon* beyond what readers of Pynchon over the years have called paranoia or conspiracy certainly contributes to this sense of the inevitable. Rather than a grand conspiracy, there is simply history. Mason and Dixon are not pawns in some great game. Dixon does ask, "Are we being us'd, by Forces invisible?" and "Whom are we working for, Mason?" (347). But this is not a paranoid book. The Jesuits, the trading companies, Captain Zhang, Royalists, many different forces and causes and organizations try to influence history, and while there may be trends, no mysterious master plan is in evidence. As Menand writes of this sentiment in the novel, "This is just the direction human history happens to run" (25).

But Pynchon's paranoia has not been replaced by an equally unknowable, unalterable historical inevitability. In *Mason & Dixon*, Pynchon presents a different sense of history. The old search for the conspirators in Pynchon's work is here, at bottom, explicitly what it was sometimes only implicitly in its earlier incarnations: a search for the answer to the question of the impossible. As is made clear in *V.,* when Weissman deciphers an atmospheric message spelling out Wittgenstein's proposition, "the world is all that is the case," Pynchon is concerned with how we know, with the implications of whether we accept only what we see or are open to more. All the searches for transcendent patterns or forces or impossible things in Pynchon's work ask if indeed the world is all that is the case. This question is asked in *Gravity's Rainbow*—where Roger Mexico sees no transcendent meaning, while Slothrop is open to anything, becomes Rocketman, and eventually fragments into many possibilities—and in *The Crying of Lot 49*, where Oedipa Maas must decide whether or not, beneath the surface of everyday life, there lives a great conspiracy. In the end the questions go unanswered: *The Crying of Lot 49* ends as the title event, which should reveal all to Oedipa, is about to happen. We cannot know if the world is all that is the case. The implication of this argument, which Pynchon seizes on in *Mason & Dixon*, is that we also cannot rule out other possibilities. And if we cannot rule out other possibilities, we cannot rule out different historical outcomes. Pynchon insists in *Mason & Dixon* on the possibility that other worlds might exist in order to ask if things might have turned out differently, or might still. If this is the way history has happened to run, it does not follow that it has had to. The cruelty that fills history does not always, in every instance, have to happen. Those who try to stop it—as Dixon does when he challenges the slave driver—are not fools. They are simply open to the possibility of what might seem historically impossible.[3]

This is openness not just to difference—to recognizing both the existence of difference and also the possibility of connecting across it—but also to a history that could have turned out differently and can still. Seeing this kind of history in *Mason & Dixon* requires seeing not just the line but what the line makes possible, seeing not just an anatomy of loss but also a celebration of continued possibility.

The course of history runs, in *Mason & Dixon*, up to a present that is multiple. There is the present of the novel's frame, that is, the 1786 from which Cherrycoke looks back and thinks about the lost promise of prerevolution America. There is also Pynchon's present, about 200 years later, the implicit frame around Cherrycoke's frame, which is all that has happened since. Thus the retrospective takes on a wider focus, including the Civil War and the postbellum years as well as the turmoil of the 1960s and the years between that turmoil and the time of the novel's publication. All of America's past between then and now, from Lancaster to Gettysburg to Kent State to Oliver North, is part of the story.

The structure of the novel, then, makes possible a way of thinking about America that crosses the lines between eras, making American history a single connected story. It also makes possible a way of thinking about history itself, about its connections and cycles. The picture of history we see in *Mason & Dixon*, like the relation of all the pasts and presents in the line of the novel, is not linear, nor is it progressive. The literary-historical argument implicit in Pynchon's use of forms from the eighteenth-century novel is that the road the novel takes through literary history is not one of progressive innovation but of recyclings, repetitions, adaptations. It is itself ampersandic. The larger historical argument implicit in Pynchon's use of forms is the same. While it seems not to accept the traditional, Enlightenment, progessivist model of history, *Mason & Dixon* does not draw a downward line either. It does not tell a story of descent or degradation. The story this novel tells is one of repetition, of repeated moments of potential change, of utopian promise, followed by failures to fully realize that promise. Each of these moments is at bottom about changing the ways in which America wants to deal with the lines it has drawn down the middle of itself and around itself, about the promise of constructing difference less divisively. And each of these subsequent failures of possibility—of these moments when the subjunctive is reduced to the indicative—is about the failure to remain open to alternatives, particularly to the alternative of connection.

As Tony Tanner notes, *Mason and Dixon*'s 1760s, the important moments in the Trystero's history in *The Crying of Lot 49*, and the moment in the German Zone in *Gravity's Rainbow* can all be seen as "explosions of change" (*American Mystery* 235).[4] All are times when much seemed possible, when barriers were down, boundaries fluid. The American 1860s and 1960s were also explosions of change. *Mason & Dixon*'s interest in slavery and the Civil War is clear. And while Pynchon's concern with the issues debated in and now identified with the 1960s may not be as evident in *Mason & Dixon* as it is in his earlier works, it is nonetheless at the center of this novel.[5]

Mason & Dixon is the product of Pynchon's continued exploration of the drawing of lines, an exploration apparently motivated in large part by the hopes raised and disappointed by the 1960s. It asks us to see the persistence of this American way of thinking by linking the 1760s, 1860s, and 1960s. What *Mason & Dixon* does not ask us to see, I am arguing, is its inevitability. Unlike Pynchon's earlier works, it accepts neither paranoia nor hopelessness nor unknowability. It does not accept the failure of the 60s to fully realize its utopian visions. Lines will always be erased and drawn again, but the way America deals with them has changed many times, and can continue to do so. It changes when America remembers that history, its history in particular, is not finished. *Mason & Dixon* is the first novel in which Pynchon can look back historically on the decade that raised so many of the issues at the center of his work: the Cold War has ended, the century's end approaches, and the 60s appears as the decade at the chronological and ideological center of the Cold War era in a way it could not have appeared at the time he wrote *Vineland*. In retrospect, the 60s have stood as a kind of running historical Rorschach test, with successive decades and different political orientations rereading the 60s according to their needs.[6] The retrospective stance on the 60s and on American history as a whole in *Mason & Dixon* is not nostalgic, as in *Vineland*, nor merely allusive. This novel is a reminder, in a post–Cold War America grown complacent in its ostensible victory, that history is not over. In the face of the triumphalist 1990s—characterized by announcements of the end of ideological contest made by Francis Fukuyama and others, nostalgic World War II anniversary celebrations, and the end not just of a century but also of a millennium—*Mason & Dixon* insists that history continues, that no telos has been reached, no real war won.[7] As America in the 90s experienced a national retrospective mood,[8] Pynchon's novel insisted that the past is still tied to the future, and utopias imagined and grasped for in the past can still be imagined and grasped for.

Michael Wood interprets the tension in the novel between indicative and subjunctive in this way: Pynchon is suggesting that what we "miss is not a mystical revelation or an ancient wisdom, and not the grand conspiracy underlying all things, but a sense of 'Human Incompletion'" (129). This incompletion, he argues, is what we need to remember if we wish to avoid the errors and cruelties of American history, the ways of dealing with division that have led to so much that is regrettable in our past. Perhaps we need to remember that there are things we don't know, that what lies on the other side of the line is not inherently worse than what is on our side, that we ought to see America always as frontier, in its most hopeful sense. America as frontier does not have to be the America that acts as if everything is new, and that what is previously established—ideas, communities—does not matter. America as frontier can simply be America as possibility. What America remembers, when it remembers that it is unfinished, is possibility; what it forgets, when it forgets to see its past and present as continuous and ongoing, is that whatever is, is not inevitable, that the world may not be all that is the case.

This sense of incompletion, of unfinishedness, can keep us open to possibility, a way of thinking represented in *Mason & Dixon* by the imagined world inside the earth. As one resident says:

> And wherever you may stand, given the Convexity, each of you is slightly *pointed away* from everybody else. . . . Here in the Earth

> Concave, everyone is pointed *at* everyone else,—ev'rybody's axes converge,—forc'd at least thus to acknowledge one another,—an entirely different set of rules for how to behave. (741)

This is also a set of rules for how to think, a way of seeing the world not just in terms of possibility but also in terms of relatedness. If each of us on the Earth Convex, in this Terra Concavan's terms, stands on the outside of an outwardly curving earth and so points slightly away from each other, then we can ignore each other and act accordingly; those on the inside of the inwardly curving Earth Concave are forced to act with others in mind. The former way of thinking and acting is presented in the novel as Mason and Dixon's: the line they draw ignores its effects on the lives they draw it through. By extension, it is an American way of being, an Enlightenment way of being, a Western way of being. The Earth Concave's alternative is thus presented not only as an alternative to American exceptionalism. Acknowledgment of the crossing of lines that is the world's reality, of the world's ampersandic actuality, is wanting everywhere. This acknowledgment is not an unfinished task only for America.

Just as the unending road of *Mason & Dixon*'s picaresque form lends a sense of unfinishedness, so too do its other borrowings from the past. The novel's intentionally anachronistic references and language are crucial to its sense of history not as simply unfinished but also as recrossing itself, as cycling back and crossing over its own past like the line of our contemporary ampersand. This sense of history can be seen in two of Pynchon's anachronistic uses of caffeinated beverages and other addictive luxuries: the last name of the narrating Rev. Cherrycoke and the Starbucks-like All Nations coffeehouse with its half-caf ordering. The first anachronism alludes to Coca-Cola, of course, the caffeinated stuff that empire now spreads around the globe. The second anachronism links the eighteenth century to the contemporary corporate homogenization exemplified by Starbucks. These two moments are connected across time and space to a present concern when Mason and Dixon stand before a tableful of coffee and sweets that a Quaker gentleman reminds them is "bought . . . with the lives of African slaves, untallied black lives broken upon the greedy engines of the Barbadoes" (329). The Quaker's remark echoes the moment in *Candide* when Candide comes across a maimed slave lying at a crossroads, who says of the hand and leg he lost in the cane fields of Surinam, "this is the price of the sugar you eat in Europe"

(40). When Candide breaks into tears and wonders for a moment if maybe this is not, as Pangloss has taught him, the best of all possible worlds, he cries not just for the slave (or for himself, finding another instance of Pangloss's error) but because he is confronted by this disturbing evidence of empire's effects. The eighteenth-century concern over the deleterious effects of globalism raised by Pynchon's allusion echoes our own contemporary concern over globalization and connects the substances that fueled empire and revolutionary thinkers like those in Pynchon's inn—the coffee, sugar, and tobacco firing their dreams of freedom, democracy, and untaxed profits—to the substances that fuel today's workers and their empire.

Pynchon's ampersandic history, connecting these different moments, enables further thought about how America has ended up where it has, and why, and whether it can go somewhere else. It asks whether the line of American history will endlessly recross itself as does the line that symbolizes the infinite, or whether the opening in one loop of our contemporary ampersand can be taken to signify the possibility of things taking off in another direction. The line of empire America has blazed across the North American continent and the world stage, according to *Mason & Dixon*, has not ended so much as paused, ready perhaps to loop back on itself once again and then continue on as before or, perhaps, head off on another path. Perhaps, this novel asks, the recognition in our post-Vietnam, post-Reagan, post–Cold War time that we have in many senses been here before will force the realization that we are more concave than convex, more pointed toward each other than away. Once that realization sets in, perhaps we will be forced not just to acknowledge each other, as the resident of Hollow Earth puts it, but to see that in our still divided yet ever more connected world, our axes converge.

Ultimately, if attention is paid only to the meanings of the line in *Mason & Dixon*, what is missed is the historical sense emblematized by the ampersand—awareness of the connections between disparate moments from across American history, the feeling that these explosions of change are repeated resurfacings of possibility, of alternative outcomes for an only seemingly inevitable future. These moments resurface in the midst of forgetting, a historical amnesia that results not only when America ignores its past entirely, or when it sees in that past only the glorious story of its founding followed by the upward path leading to its triumphant present, but also when it sees in its past only the inevitable cruelty attendant upon its persistent binarism. Rather than seeing our past as the story of failure to get this binary monkey off its back, *Mason & Dixon* wonders if we can learn to think in terms of possibility. Certainly, as Bernard Duyfhuizen writes, the book aims "to unravel the historical roots of the racial and social dislocations" of contemporary America. But its exploration of the past is more than a disinterment, an autopsy explaining the death of American promise. If a medical analogy is wanted, the psychotherapeutic might be more apt: Pynchon's talking cure aims to get America to realize the patterns of thought it learned in its youth, in order to get it to think differently in the future. Cherrycoke ends the paragraph in which he describes the America of 1786 as bickering itself into fragments: "for the Times are as impossible to calculate, this Advent, as the Distance to a Star" (6). Pynchon's contemporary America might also seem to be following an old pattern by bickering itself into fragments, and might seem as difficult to understand as Cherrycoke's times did to him. This phrase comes from the very beginning of the book; by the end, through telling his story, Cherrycoke may have figured a few things out. And they may be things Pynchon thinks applicable to our own era.

Mason & Dixon ends sadly, with Mason descending not just into senescence but also into paranoia. But he has, from his relationship with Dixon and his relation to the land through which they drew their line, learned some of the lessons I argue Pynchon is trying to teach. At the end of the American section of the book, they are both in flux, and have learned to like it:

> Betwixt themselves, neither feels British enough anymore, nor quite American, for either Side of the Ocean. They are content to reside like Ferrymen or Bridge-Keepers, ever in a Ubiquity of Flow, before a ceaseless spectacle of Transition. (713)

While Mason has learned a new way to think about division, to reside in transition, he cannot hold on to it forever. When he regresses to his previous way of seeing things, it is the last moment of the subjunctive: "the Event not yet 'reduc'd to Certainty'. . . [a] last moment of Immortality" (177). The inevitability of death, though, is accompanied by a reminder of the magical possibility inherent in and symbolized by America. In the words of Mason's once estranged children, words that close the novel,

> "The Stars are so close you won't need a Telescope."
> "The Fish jump into your Arms. The Indians know Magick."
> (773)

Any times, especially those times of retrenchment following explosions of change, can be as difficult to calculate as the distance to a star. *Mason & Dixon* reminds us that there have been times when we were closer to the stars, that they may come again, that in some ways our distance to them is always in flux. Impossibly far or unimaginably close, the stars will always be separate from us, but, like the residents of the Earth Concave, we can lean toward them, and each other.

Notes

1. For the accuracy of Pynchon's language, see Menand.

2. Some argue that *Vineland*, with its focus on family, is an exception; see Moody and Berger, who notes, "The novel ends with a family reunion; its final word is 'home'" (par. 3), though he gives more weight to the relationship between two other (unrelated) characters, Prairie and Weed (par. 45).

3. Ricciardi also sees a turn away from total resignation in *Mason & Dixon*. She cites Richard Rorty's argument in his recent essay "Achieving Our Country," in which he

> argues that Pynchon's novels in general, and *Vineland* in particular, merely articulate a desperate pessimism unaccompanied by any impulse to outrage or protest and exemplify a "rueful acquiescence in the end of American hopes"

and disagrees, arguing that "*Mason & Dixon* deviates from the sense of resignation that permeates Pynchon's earlier works insofar as the novel responds to an urgent consciousness of the need for historical witnessing" (1072). While failing to take issue with Rorty's overstatement or specify the content of this need, Ricciardi does identify the turn taken by Pynchon in *Mason & Dixon*.

4. For a description of a similar meaning in the representation of a single historical moment, the 1960s, in *Vineland*, see Berger, who likens Pynchon's understanding of later interpretations of the 60s to Walter Benjamin's *jeztzeit,* "the critical moment of historical, redemptive possibility which continues to erupt into the present even after many previous failures" (par 5).

5. As David Cowart has pointed out, the connections between the 1960s and

Pynchon's work have not been much explored by critics, a failure only slightly redressed by reactions to *Vineland* ("Pynchon" 12).

6. See Miller for the ways in which the 1960s have been reimagined by subsequent decades.

7. For the way in which the dissolution of the Soviet Union was incorporated into the triumphalist reading of American history, see Engelhardt, *End* and "Victors."

8. The national mood of retrospection—which can be ascribed not just to the end-of-an-era sense imparted by the close of the century and the millennium but also to the end of the Cold War and the 50th anniversaries of World War II–era events—can be seen in a number of ways: the works of Ken Burns; the rise of the History Channel, which was launched in 1995; the growth of the *Biography* series in the mid-90s; the popularity of historian Stephen Ambrose; war movies such as *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), *The Thin Red Line* (1998), and *Pearl Harbor* (2001); CNN's 1998 24-part history of the Cold War; the 1998 miniseries *The Sixties;* and decade-specific revivals in popular music and television (*That Seventies Show*, 1998).

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"Your Thoughts Make Shape Like Snow": Louis MacNeice on Stephen Spender

Richard Danson Brown

The notion that the left-wing writers of the 1930s formed a homogenous clique of interchangeable, mutually aggrandizing talents has become one of the clichés of twentieth-century literary history. Roy Campbell's satirical figure "MacSpaunday" typifies such accounts (Alexander 199). Campbell's amalgamation of MacNeice, Spender, Auden, and Day-Lewis into a single careerist, cowardly poetaster has often been recycled as a convenient shorthand for "the Auden group." Yet as influential studies of the period and the writers have shown, such accounts misrepresent the complex affiliations that existed between men like Louis MacNeice and Stephen Spender.[1] This essay focuses on MacNeice and Spender during the early 1930s to explore two related issues: first, how MacNeice's reading of Spender's *Poems* (1933) shaped his own breakthrough volume, *Poems* (1935); and second, how the observation of this relationship can help to refine understanding of MacNeice's poetics at this pivotal stage in his career.

§

MacNeice and Spender were never altogether at ease with one another. Contemporaries at Oxford, fellow aspiring poets who jointly edited the 1929 *Oxford Poetry,* their accounts of each other are indicative of a rivalry sporadically tempered by mutual affection. According to Spender, MacNeice was ironic and supercilious, always ready to put the innocent Spender down with a wry witticism (*Journals* 263–64); according to MacNeice, Spender was an archetype of the romantic poet, always self-consciously advertising his poethood to an indifferent world (*Strings* 113). Such rivalry is hardly surprising: MacNeice was two years older than Spender, yet Spender achieved literary celebrity ahead of MacNeice. Though MacNeice's *Blind Fireworks* was published in 1929 while he was still an undergraduate, the volume was not a significant success. In contrast, Spender had seven poems in Michael Roberts's influential *New Signatures* anthology of 1932, while his *Poems* (1933) received wildly enthusiastic notices.[2] During the early 1930s, he was lionized by literary London while MacNeice worked in relative obscurity as a lecturer in classics at the University of Birmingham.[3]

The main evidence of tetchy collegiality is MacNeice's portrait of Spender in *The Strings Are False*, and Spender's response after its posthumous publication in 1965. MacNeice applauds Spender's integrity to his artistic vision in his account of the furor that surrounded the performance of Spender's play *Trial of a Judge* by the Group Theatre in 1938—which communist spectators felt endorsed the moral qualms of its liberal protagonist—but also enjoys himself at Spender's expense in the clash between interior décor and political commitment:

> Stephen Spender . . . was now living in a chic apartment with a colour scheme out of *Vogue*, a huge vulcanite writing-desk and over the fireplace an abstract picture by Wyndham Lewis. Very comfortable and elegant but not quite big enough for Stephen; his enormous craggy apostolic flaring face seemed liable to burst the walls . . . [in *Forward from Liberalism*] S. argued (accepting the dialectic) liberalism had played its part; once the vanguard, was now reaction; the man of good will today must acknowledge the Third International. His book, however, offended many in all parties. The Right did not like it, the Liberals did not like it, and the Comrades . . . could not help noticing that S., who wanted to be at home with Stalin, was much more at ease with J. S. Mill. (*Strings* 166–67).

Though broadly sympathetic to Spender's dilemma, MacNeice's account retains a critical detachment, a sense that Stephen really should have known better. This is highlighted in the image of Spender as being too big for his designer flat: just as Spender's face threatens "to burst the walls" of his physical milieu, he threatens to break the constraints of his ideological milieu, though crucially without being fully conscious of his position. The irony of this portrait is in the implied gap between Spender's commitment and his self-awareness. As MacNeice comments with an apparently effortless detachment, Spender "had not been born for dogma" (*Strings* 168), though again it takes Spender much longer to realize this than it takes MacNeice. Spender's *Journals* from November 1965 make clear that it was MacNeice's "almost cold-blooded air of supercilious disdain" that he found most irritating in *The Strings Are False:*

> To judge from his recollections he always seems to have been fully conscious at the time of any one relationship he had of his own attitude towards it, e.g., in the account of his first marriage, it seems that he had from the moment of falling in love with Mary Beasley[4] the same detached awareness of her character. He certainly did seem to "cast a cold eye" on the world around him. One thought of him leaning back, regarding one with amused detachment through half-closed eyes. In fact his memoir shows that he did regard me in this way. But I can't believe—from remembering them together at Oxford—that he judged Mary quite as objectively, at the time of their engagement even, as here appears. (*Journals* 263–64)

Yet the MacNeice-Spender relationship is more important for its implications about their poetry than for its intimations of gossipy indiscretion. My interest is in how MacNeice uses Spender's *Poems* in the articulation of his poetic in the essay "Poetry To-day" and in the development of his own work in *Poems*. In this context, Spender's response to MacNeice's memoirs has a critical as well as a biographical relevance: MacNeice's later recapitulations of the past tend to suggest a lucidity and poise in his observation both of events and himself as an observer. Even a poem as devastating as "Autobiography" casts the past coolly;[5] it articulates not so much the trauma of an unhappy childhood as the self-cauterized and ultimately illusory objectivity of its subject. The poem keeps the processes of repression more vivid than what is being repressed; even the pain in "When my silent terror cried / Nobody, nobody replied" is felt as something "silent" and unobserved by the adult world.[6] Similarly, the final couplet, "I got up; the chilly sun / Saw me walk away alone" expresses less the pain of emotional isolation than the absence of such pain (*Collected Poems* 183–84). The haunting refrain *"Come back early or never come"* depends for its effect on the strategic repression of the expected internal rhyme "home": we half anticipate "Come back early or never come home," but the text shrewdly denies such an emphatic sentimental gesture. The poem's popularity is unsurprising: through its focus on repression, MacNeice's poetic "Autobiography" can easily be generalized.

On the other hand, though MacNeice was to present himself as an ironic observer of the literary and political zeitgeist in texts like *Autumn Journal* and *The Strings Are False*, *Poems* displays a young poet struggling between conflicting priorities and potential voices. The volume represents MacNeice's not always successful attempts to clarify his poetic and his poetry. Such self-conscious endeavor is also evident in "Poetry Today," which cites Spender as an influence while remaining cautious about the more intimidating precedents set by Yeats, Eliot, and Auden. Studying MacNeice's critical assessment and poetic reaction to Spender's work in the mid-1930s thus illuminates the processes through which MacNeice came to his habitual self-presentation as a detached observer.

§

Differences of political emphasis seem to have been at the root of MacNeice's suspicion of Spender. His review of *The Destructive Element: A Study of Modern Writers and Beliefs* (May 1935) is simultaneously sympathetic to Spender's theory—that James, Yeats, Eliot, and Lawrence "are all concerned with the same 'political subject'"—and skeptical of Marxist theories of literature and Spender's acceptance of these:

> At the moment, even the most intelligent communist tends to relapse into crude generalizations. Thus Mr. Spender quotes, apparently with approval, Lenin's statement "Art belongs to the people." . . . Lenin is here repeating the fallacies of Tolstoy. (*Criticism* 5, 7)

Though MacNeice was intrigued by the intellectual possibilities of communism, he remained dubious about the translation of such theories into practice. Accordingly, Lenin's socialist puritanism is connected with Tolstoy's Christian puritanism. In each case, ideological systems inappropriately constrict creativity. Because Spender identifies himself with the Communist Party and the Soviet experience,[7] for MacNeice his work has a bogus flavor—note the condescension implicit in what is essentially a positive review: "having read this book with a *moderately* open mind, I do not find that the thread or plot of it is arbitrary" (my emphasis, *Criticism* 5).[8]

This impression that MacNeice's resisted communist doctrine is supported by his earlier reply to the questionnaire inquiry carried out by Geoffrey Grigson for the October 1934 edition of *New Verse.* Responding to the question "Do you take your stand with any political or politico-economic party or creed?," MacNeice answered, "No. In weaker moments I wish I could" (*Criticism* 4). Literary historians have taken this as a general statement of MacNeice's attitude towards political commitment.[9] It is worth observing that MacNeice's ideological detachment has worn rather better than his contemporaries' conviction. His resistance to communism is unusual because it neither resolves into a right-wing critique of socialism (in the manner of Wyndham Lewis) nor a reassertion of liberalism (in the manner of Day-Lewis). As late as 1942, MacNeice would write that he "distrust[s] all parties but consider[s] capitalism must go" (*Prose* 72). MacNeice's politics were characteristically independent; as Margot Heinemann observes, "He was never a Communist . . . but he did come, however unwillingly, to a strongly felt anti-fascist and socialist commitment which—unlike Auden and Spender—he never seems to have felt much need to modify" (345). Moreover, the wit of his reply to the *New Verse* questionnaire can distract attention from the fact that he was troubled by the same concerns as those writers who were Communist Party members. In this sense, Spender and MacNeice's *Poems* explore analogous problems: the tensions between individualism and commitment alongside pervasive feelings of cultural and emotional estrangement.

As an illustration of this, consider two texts that in MacNeice's *Poems* that are printed on adjacent pages, "Turf-stacks" and "The Individualist Speaks" (30–31).[10] A critical consensus has emerged about these poems: they embody MacNeice's suspicion of communism and his desire to deflate the controlling patterns set up by such theories.[11] In this view, "Turf-stacks" juxtaposes a positive pastoral landscape with a negative image of an industrial city. Yet when it was first published in *New Verse*, it had the unadorned title "Poem."[12] By renaming it for volume publication, MacNeice implies that it is a pastoral. The earlier title, however, betokens a deeper uncertainty about the poem's orientation that is truer to its representations of town and country:

Among these turf-stacks graze no iron horses
Such as stalk, such as champ in towns and the soul of crowds,
Here is no mass-production of neat thoughts
No canvas shrouds for the mind nor any black hearses:
The peasant shambles on his boots like hooves
Without thinking at all or wanting to run in grooves.
(*Collected Poems* 18).

Though the pastoral landscape might seem preferable to the "iron" city, the peasant is reduced in the couplet to a human horse who "shambles . . . Without thinking at all." While he escapes the "mass-production of neat thoughts," such freedom does not endow him with autonomy or even consciousness. The dichotomy between an authentic countryside and a mechanized city thus hardly implies a traditional preference of the one over the other.

Uncertainty continues in the second stanza, which presents what is usually seen as MacNeice's attack on communist intellectuals: "those who lack the peasant's conspirators . . . Will feel the need of a fortress against ideas and against the / Shuddering insidious shock of the theory vendors." While the review of *The Destructive Element* does attack "the theory vendors" of Marxist criticism, it is misleading to read this stanza as an uncomplicated amplification of that view. The speaker of "Turf-stacks" is indiscriminately hostile to "theory" and "ideas" alike. Where in the first stanza the peasant is thoughtless, so here the speaker wants "a fortress" not only against Marxist "theory" but also "against ideas" of any kind. In the final stanza, the attack on ideas precipitates a retreat to a "tunnel where the world recedes":

For we are obsolete who like the lesser things
Who play in corners with looking-glasses or beads;
It is better we should go quickly; go into Asia
Or any other tunnel where the world recedes,
Or turn blind wantons like the gulls who scream
And rip the edge off any ideal or dream. (19)

The focus has shifted from satire of "theory vendors" to the expression of a self-consciously aesthetic sensibility. The speaker concedes the obsolescence of his class, languidly imagines a retreat into Asia, and a final transformation of such aesthetes into "blind wantons" who "rip the edge off any ideal or dream." Even if MacNeice sympathizes with the desire to retreat and "play in corners with looking-glasses or beads," this is hardly a ringing endorsement of such a strategy. As "Aubade"—another poem concerned with the interplay of subjectivity and the external world—puts it, we have "to look forward to . . . a precise dawn / Of sallow grey bricks, and newsboys crying war" (*Collected Poems* 30). Retreat in such conditions is not an option: "Aubade" reluctantly admits that whether "we" like it or not, the outside world increasingly impinges on the interior. Hence "Turf-stacks" envisages such detachment resolving into the screaming, destructive cynicism of "the gulls." It anticipates the bitterness of the wartime poem "The Satirist," where the perception of the failure of "large ideals" creates "a heartless type / Whose hobby is giving everyone else the lie" (*Collected Poems* 210). MacNeice's consistent suspicion of anti-intellectualism suggests that the speaker of "Turf-stacks" is a Bloomsbury-ite, an aesthete resistant to the alleged contamination of art with ideas. Two years later he would attack this rarefied constituency more directly in his "Letter to W. H. Auden": "it is a blessing to our generation, though one in the eye for Bloomsbury, that you discharged into poetry the subject-matters of psycho-analysis, politics and economics" (MacNeice, *Criticism* 83).[13]

Similarly, the individualist of "The Individualist Speaks" celebrates drunken violence, travestying any ethic of social solidarity: "we / Knock our brains together extravagantly / Instead of planting them to make more trees" (*Collected Poems* 22). This image is reminiscent of MacNeice's positive definition of communism in *The Destructive Element* review: "Communism in the truer sense is an effort to think, and think into action, human society as an organism (*not* a machine, which is too static a metaphor)" (MacNeice, *Criticism* 6). The individualist scorns the sort of "organic" activity MacNeice himself advocates. As Peter McDonald observes of the review, "the bite of this passage . . . comes from its radical questioning of any privileged and secure perspectives. . . . [MacNeice is] rejecting the fixed, panoptic gaze of Marxist analysis along with the entrenched positions of bourgeois liberalism" (17). Similarly, in the poem, despite the glamour of his nonconformity, the individualist is, like the sensibility explored in "Turf-stacks," a destructive opponent of any such attempts to "think into action, human society as an organism." As a poetic diptych in *Poems*, "Turf-stacks" and "The Individualist Speaks" point to the limitations of both communism and individualism.

So while MacNeice may seem to have achieved his political sang-froid without effort, the evidence of *Poems* suggests otherwise. His suspicion of communism is not at this stage a fully formulated skepticism but rather a reluctant resistance to an apparently oversimplified creed, all the while conscious that in the contemporary political landscape there were few realistic alternatives to that creed. It is worth remembering that the collapse of the Labour government in 1931, and its replacement by Ramsay MacDonald's National Government, signaled for MacNeice's contemporaries the death of constitutional socialism.[14] MacNeice's response to these events some 10 years later, though predictably world-weary, retains a tinge of satiric bitterness: "the deplorable trinity of MacDonald, Jimmy Thomas and Snowden—suddenly called themselves 'National', sold their birthright" (*Strings* 135).

"Poetry To-day" offers a revealing insight into MacNeice's thinking, since it was written at the same time as the later texts in *Poems:* both were first published in September 1935.[15] MacNeice contextualizes the current poetic scene through a condensed history of recent developments alongside case studies of selected poets, notably Auden and Spender. As in "Modern Writers and Beliefs," MacNeice discusses how communism might aid the writing of poetry. And like "Turf-stacks" and "The Individualist Speaks," MacNeice's account veers between an individualist critique of communism's totalizing claims alongside the recognition that some aspects of communist thought could be useful to contemporary poets. Recapitulating the analogy between the views of Lenin and Tolstoy, he writes:

> I have no patience with those who think poetry will become merely a handmaid of communism. Christianity, in the time of the Fathers, made the same threats; all poetry but hymns was bogus, no one was to write anything but hymns.

This warning, however, is followed by the caveat that "intoxication with a creed is . . . a good antidote to defeatist individualism" (*Criticism* 25).

MacNeice's ambiguity about the politics of literature is particularly evident in his readings of Spender. Valentine Cunningham has written of the "vogue" for "Critical toughness" during the 1930s, citing among others MacNeice's review of Auden and Isherwood's *On the Frontier:* "The mystical love scenes of Eric and Anna made one long for a sack to put one's head in" (34–35).[16] The presentation of Spender in "Poetry To-day" would seem to support this reading: he "is a naïf who uses communism as a frame for his personal thrills"; he "has swallowed D. H. Lawrence whole and mixed him up with Shelley, Nakt-Kultur and Communist Evangelism" (26, 38). However, MacNeice's account of Spender's *Poems* is significantly more complex than such bitchy sound bites might suggest. MacNeice repeatedly draws attention to the fragmentary quality of Spender's work:

> He will . . . be the man for posterity, if our poetry is ever dug up in fragments; here is someone who really *felt* posterity will say; and will conclude that he died young. His poems have a fragmentary appearance as it is . . . [they] have not got that crystal self-contained perfection which is so glibly attributed to the ideal lyric. (38)

MacNeice is uncharacteristically hesitant. The fragmentary, excavated Spender sounds like a type of Chatterton—a romantic, self-destructive figure, awkwardly baring his soul through a patchy lyricism. Yet if posterity's imagined verdict suggests an attack, the charge that Spender's work lacks "crystal self-contained perfection" is identified as a virtue. But even here MacNeice is unsure; the fragmentariness of Spender's poems points in opposing directions: "I sometimes think that this is vicious but prefer to think that is their virtue" (38).

MacNeice's ambivalence is partly indicative of his broader suspicion of the collage technique characteristic of the first generation of modernists. Earlier in the essay, he praises Eliot as an innovator and technician, but then attacks Pound's *Cantos* for their indiscriminate use of what Grigson had called "the cultural reference rock-climbing style" (qtd. in *Criticism* 17). Indeed, Spender's 1933 essay "Poetry and Revolution" (first published in the *New Country* anthology) begins with a traditional assertion of the need for poems to be "separate and complete and ideal worlds" (*Thirties* 48). In this essay, Spender is concerned to face up to the tensions between revolutionary demands for a propagandist poetry and "the bourgeois tradition" to which he belonged (51). In such a context, his espousal of a traditional poetic is unsurprising: Spender needs the authority of the tradition—and its notions of the necessary autonomy and coherence of poetic texts—to resist a propagandist model of the function poetry. Fragmentation, in other words, was a rather dubious virtue in the early 1930s. A fragmentary poem was either the ultimate recherché highbrowism of Pound's *Cantos*, with attendant right-wing sympathies, or an aesthetically feeble work of left-wing propaganda.

MacNeice continues: "if you read Spender's one volume of *Poems* through several times, you will *probably* decide that he is an interesting and valuable poet" (my emphasis; 38). That *probably* is characteristic: MacNeice thinks that he thinks that Spender is "interesting and valuable," but he is not altogether sure. Hence he cites Robert Penn Warren's damning critique of Spender's "thoroughly conventional 'poetical' idiom, his relaxed rhythms, and his thin, almost feminine, subject matter" before mounting his case for the defense:

> This is a point of view which it is only too easy to take up. . . . [Spender] is patently very limited. But . . . he has made the most of his limitations. The poet's "hands" are in this case not deft and virtuoso but they have a patient tact . . . which presses his confused world of emotional clichés into a harmony which is, fittingly, incomplete. His "relaxed rhythms" are entirely suited to his subject matter; slickness is alien to him. I find myself that when I want to make sure not to be fulsome, I tend to write in this way. Thus two lines of mine which I consider good—
>
> These moments let him retain like limbs,
> His time not crippled by flaws of faith or memory
>
> —are, if I am not mistaken, typical of Spender's manner. (38–39)

MacNeice's uncertainty is partly a product of Spender's failure to accord with the stylistic directives given elsewhere in "Poetry To-day." While Auden and Day-Lewis are praised for having pruned "exclamatory sentimentality," Spender is noted as an exception to this tendency (35). This passage underlines the clichéd aspect of Spender's verse and its debts to Shelley—a debt that was to MacNeice symptomatic of an unpurged adolescence.[17] Yet what is absorbing about this critique is the sense that MacNeice seems to change his mind in the process of writing: Spender's weaknesses are itemized but are subsequently recuperated as virtues. The value of Spender's poetry is that its fragmentary form exactly complements its emotionally contorted subject matter.

That MacNeice acknowledges borrowing "Spender's manner" is significant. While "Poetry To-day" is variously admiring of Eliot and Yeats, MacNeice cautions against using them as models. They are

> not to be too closely copied. If we must copy we must either copy people of our own age and society . . . or else people so far removed from us by time or language that our copying will not impose on anyone. Thus I avoided reading Eliot for three years or so that I might not write fake Eliot. But when I wrote the Spenderesque lines quoted above, I did not regard them as fake Spender because I knew they were proper to me; whereas Eliotesque lines would not have been proper to me but merely composed *ab extra.* (41)

Despite MacNeice's best intentions, "fake Eliot" is apparent within *Poems*. "Trapeze" strikes a series of would-be Prufrockian poses: "Blood slavers over the evening sky . . . On the skyline shaggy spears of grass / Itch ominously and the moon / Limps on a crutch whose ferrule taps to us / Doom (if rightly we decodify)" (57). Unsurprisingly, such poems were later dropped.[18] "Poetry To-day" suggests MacNeice's acute awareness of the difficulties inherent in such imitation. Copying Eliot is riskier than copying Spender because of the dangers of "impos[ing] on anyone." In other words, the imitator imposes on the model by the borrowing; implicitly, the imitator risks having the model's vision imposed on his own text. This is certainly what happens with poems like "Trapeze": MacNeice's emergent voice is swamped by the noisy echoes of Eliot's stronger originals. But borrowing from Spender is permissible, MacNeice argues, because his "Spenderesque lines . . . were proper to me."

We can get a clearer sense of the issues implicit here by examining the passage in "Poetry To-day" that MacNeice cites in detail. It comes from the long poem that concludes *Poems*, the "Ode" written for MacNeice's son Daniel. The text that lies behind "Ode" is Yeats's "A Prayer for my Daughter." As Stallworthy notes, both Yeats's and MacNeice's prayers for their children are connected to prayers for Ireland in times of uncertainty (168). Yeats warns his daughter off the "intellectual hatred" that has made Maud Gonne "Barter . . . every good . . . For an old bellows full of angry wind" (189). Similarly, in times of "mob mania," MacNeice "pray[s] off from my son the love of that infinite / Which is too greedy and too obvious; let his Absolute / Like any four-walled house be put up decently" (MacNeice, *Poems* 60–61). Yet as we have seen, MacNeice was sensitive to the pitfalls of imitating writers of the authority of Eliot or Yeats. In December 1935, he warned would-be imitators of Yeats's plays that he "is a very single-minded or whole-minded artist. Take hints if you like but for God's sake don't imitate him. You would have to be him first, which you're not" ("Some Notes" 8). Hence though prompted by "A Prayer for my Daughter," "Ode" is not a direct imitation; rather, MacNeice follows the occasion of Yeats's poem but eschews much of its form, rhetoric, and attitudes. He does not adopt the tenor of Yeats's advice, his diction, or his "ceremonious" (190) eight-line stanzas. Indeed, "Ode" is unusual for MacNeice in adopting a kind of free verse. Its stanzas come in a range of different sizes; its rhyming is unpredictable and unstable. This is why I think that in "Poetry To-day" MacNeice connects "Ode" with Spender: Spender's less intimidating style gave him a means of assimilating the stronger influence of Yeats to his own poetic vocabulary.

The image of Daniel MacNeice's "time not crippled by flaws of faith and memory" echoes the third stanza of Spender's "What I expected":

> The wearing of Time,
> And the watching of cripples pass
> With limbs shaped like questions
> In their odd twist,
> The pulverous grief
> Melting the bones with pity,
> The sick falling from earth—
> These, I could not foresee. (*Poems* 25–26)[19]

Spender juxtaposes anticipation with actuality: his persona had not expected "the watching of cripples pass / With limbs shaped like questions," or his inability to remedy their plight. "Ode" by contrast is couched as a didactic poem; MacNeice issues a string of metaphysical and aesthetic nostrums. Spender's cripples are transposed into a metaphor that conveys the wholeness of experience MacNeice wishes for his son:

> Therefore let not my son, halving the truth
> Be caught between jagged edges;
> And let him not falsify the world
> By taking it to pieces;
> The marriage of Cause and Effect, Form and Content
> Let him not part asunder.
> Wisdom for him in the time of tulips
> Monastic repose, martial élan,

> Then the opening mouth a dragon or a voluptuary—
> These moments let him retain like limbs
> His time not crippled by flaws of faith or memory.
> (*Poems* 64–65)[20]

While this stanza recalls the manner of "A Prayer for my Daughter" (for example "May she become a flourishing hidden tree / That all her thoughts may like the linnet be" [189]), its poetic effect is substantially different. Line length is dictated more by syntax than by verse pattern, as in the prosy sprawl of the trimeter lines "By taking it to pieces" and "Let him not part asunder"; half- and para-rhymes proliferate ("edges" / "pieces"; "voluptuary" / "memory"); in short, there is none of the traditional couplet music of Yeats's stanzas. To be sure, MacNeice was not writing the modernist free verse of poets like Williams or cummings: this stanza retains relatively traditional rhythms and juxtapositions—it displays what "Poetry To-day" calls "the reappearing beat of the old verse" (30). But the point is that it avoids the elaborate formalism of "A Prayer for my Daughter" and recalls the very different formal effects of Spender's best work. These have been well described by O'Neill and Reeves:

> Spender's stanzaic shapes and overall structures are held open to the often ragged mass of feeling; tentative and exploratory, they are concerned to mirror the emergence into words of consciousness. (126)

This captures the loose and open structures of such key texts in Spender's *Poems* as "In 1929," "oh young men oh young comrades," and "After they have tired of the brilliance of cities" and mirrors MacNeice's description of the fragmentary appearance of Spender's lyrics.

"What I expected" is slightly more formal in that it is made up of four eight-line stanzas with a largely regular rhyme scheme. Nevertheless, as in "Ode," line length and rhyme are shaped more by the exigencies of syntax than by adherence to a formal pattern. Hence in the first half of the third stanza, Spender sacrifices the expected rhyme at the end of the fourth line to emphasize the impact of "The sick falling from earth" on the speaker:

> The wearing of Time,
> And the watching of cripples pass
> With limbs shaped like questions
> In their odd twist,

"What I expected" is an adroit compromise between the impulses to form and to freedom: "twist" fails to rhyme convincingly with "pass," but in that failure assonates and alliterates with "questions." Spender dexterously manages the shape of his verse so that it mirrors the "odd twist" of the cripples it describes and underlines the "questions" the passing cripples make the speaker ask himself. Such a subtle marriage of "Form and Content" is in keeping with the poem's broader agenda, in which Spender appears to deflate the speaker's naiveté with a lesson in sober reality: "I had not foreseen . . . The lack of good to touch / The fading of body and soul" (25). The expected trajectory, however, is weakened by the poem's restatement of the speaker's original vision in the final stanza: "I had expected always . . . Some final innocence / To save from dust . . . Like the created poem / Or the dazzling crystal" (26). Spender laconically refuses to interiorize the lesson he teaches himself, and in so doing frustrates the reader's expectation that the poem will endorse the potentially platitudinous wisdom of experience.

I suggest therefore that the stanzaic form of "Ode" is reminiscent of Spender's practice in *Poems*. It could be further argued that the shifting perspectives of "What I expected" inform "Ode" and are mobilized against the ultimately authoritarian shadow of Yeats. As MacNeice was to observe in 1941, "A Prayer for my Daughter" articulates Yeats's nostalgia for a more ceremonious and structured past (*Poetry of Yeats* 120). "Ode" catches MacNeice at his most anti-Yeatsian in his characteristic reluctance to dogmatize: "I cannot draw up any code / There are too many qualifications / Too many asterisk asides / Too many crosses in the margin" (65). Immediately before this, MacNeice offers a direct rebuke to the style of parenting implied by "A Prayer for My Daughter":

> I remember all the houses where parents
> Have reared their children to be parents
> (Cut box and privet and parrot's voice)
> To be clerks to total the flow of alien money
> To be florists to design these wreaths and wedding bouquets
> (65)

Though MacNeice's ostensible target is the bourgeoisie of "Cut box and privet," this passage registers a resistance to the assumptions that underlie Yeats's poem. Where Yeats envisages his daughter "Rooted in one dear perpetual place," brought by "her bridegroom" to an aristocratic and "ceremonious" house (189–90), MacNeice asserts the folly of rearing "children to be parents" and in the final line equates "wedding bouquets" with funereal "wreaths." As John Engle puts it, "'Ode' is MacNeice's 'no thanks'" to Yeats (73). Hence at the close of a text ostensibly composed of paternal wisdom, MacNeice becomes radically skeptical of the tradition he is working in. What is the point, he asks, of rearing children to become facsimiles of their parents who will unquestioningly "parrot" the same values? Such resistance to the hortatory mode in what is a designedly didactic poem recalls the paradoxical structure of "What I expected." In both texts, the poets seem to be offering an exemplary moral pattern that they ultimately deny.

Thus "Poetry To-day" indicates MacNeice's tempered admiration for the technique of Spender's *Poems*, and in particular the complementary relationship between his "relaxed rhythms" and his subject matter. "Ode" demonstrates this in practice as MacNeice adopts Spender's manner as a means of avoiding the "slickness"—or rather the rhetorical amplitude and grandeur—of Yeats's "A Prayer for my Daughter." Yet as we have seen, "Poetry To-day" is far from a ringing endorsement of Spender. If MacNeice admired the formal accomplishment of his lyrics, he remained skeptical about Spender's progressive politicization of his work in *Poems* and beyond.[21] The critical relation between the two poets' work can be felt most clearly when MacNeice's "To a Communist" is read alongside the poem to which it probably replies, Spender's "After they have tired of the brilliance of cities."

§

MacNeice's admiration for Spender's poem is shown by the fact that he cited it twice in important contexts. First in "Poetry To-day," the last four lines of the poem's first stanza illustrate the new poets' technical economy, resulting in an innovative poetry of "simple statement" as opposed to the overenumerative verse of writers like Pound and Sacheverell Sitwell (MacNeice, *Criticism* 30–31). But the more revealing comment is in *Modern Poetry* (1938):

> Spender's most effective use of imagery is when one image pervades and controls a whole poem, as in the poem beginning "After they have tired of the brilliance of cities. . . ." This poem

is dominated by the word "snow" with its associations of hunger, universality and clarity:

> It is death stalks through life
> Grinning white through all faces
> Clean and equal like the shine from snow . . .
>
> And our strength is now the strength of our bones
> Clean and equal like the shine from snow . . .
>
> We have come at last to a country
> Where light equal, like the shine from snow, strikes all faces . . .
>
> But through torn-down portions of old fabric let their eyes
> Watch the admiring dawn explode like a shell
> Around us, dazing us with its light like snow. (109–10)[22]

Once again, MacNeice's criticism is almost as interesting for its omissions as for its assertions. "After they have tired . . . " is a lyrical anticipation of a communist revolution. Although Spender was not to become a member of the Communist Party until later in the decade, poems like this were to mark him as an enthusiastic sympathizer with the cause.[23] As early as 1932, Roberts's *New Signatures* included such communistic poems as "The Funeral" (a utopian vision of "the World State" replacing "individual grief"), and "oh young men oh comrades" (a lyric incitement to revolutionary consciousness).[24] "After they have tired . . . " looks forward with a wide-eyed gasp of delight to the end of capitalism: after "they"—presumably the bourgeoisie—"have tired of the brilliance of cities . . . Then those streets the rich built with their easy love / Fade like old cloths" (*Poems* 47). Spender keeps the process of revolution unspecific; it is evoked as a seamless development in human consciousness as the "We" of the second stanza become aware of social injustice. Hence the third stanza presents the communist millennium in terms that are almost reminiscent of the discovery of a new and more beautiful planet:

> Readers of this strange language,
> We have come at last to a country
> Where light equal, like the shine from snow, strikes all faces,
> Here you may wonder

> How it was that works, money, interest, building, could ever hide
> The palpable and obvious love of man for man. (48)

As MacNeice's comments suggest, the poem is breathtakingly assured in its use of traditional lyric resources to fit new social and political contexts: this stanza catches Spender's exhilaration in the new "country" with an unlikely precision. Through its focus on the strangeness of the "language" he employs, and the "wonder" experienced by the "Readers" and participants in this cataclysmic change, the poem cannily licenses and embodies the reader's astonishment. Spender attempts to redirect the skepticism of his bourgeois readers into the more politically tractable response of "wonder." However, the lyric beauty of the poem leaves it open to less sympathetic constructions. In the context of his positive discussion of Spender's imagery, it is unsurprising that MacNeice did not quote the beginning of the final stanza:

> Oh comrades, let not those who follow after
> —The beautiful generation that shall spring from our sides—
> Let not them wonder how after the failure of banks
> The failure of cathedrals and the declared insanity of our rulers,
> We lacked the Spring-like resources of the tiger
> Or of plants who strike out new roots to gushing waters. (48)

These lines recall MacNeice's description of Spender in "Poetry To-day" as having "swallowed D. H. Lawrence whole and mixed him up with Shelley . . . and Communist Evangelism." The communist idioms of comrades, banks, and insane rulers nestle uneasily beside the vaguer imagery of "The beautiful generation that shall spring from our sides" and "plants who strike out new roots to gushing waters." In other words, neoromantic images and diction are assimilated to the poetic task of anticipating the new revolutionary dawn. As Julian Symons has written of his reading of Auden's "A Communist to Others" in the early 1930s, "Rupert Brookeian gush" was detectable in Spender's poem (Bucknell and Jenkins 178). Whether this is a fair reading or not, "After they have tired . . ." can seem to be a poem of unalloyed utopianism that naively deploys romantic idioms in support of revolutionary doctrine. While MacNeice admired the technical accomplishment of the poem—its organization around the image of snow—he was resistant to what he took to be its overly optimistic vision. I suggest that this resistance is clarified in "To a Communist."

There has been little detailed commentary on this poem, perhaps because it seems to be a self-explanatory satire of a generic communist, just as "The Individualist Speaks" portrays a generalized individualist.[25] But MacNeicean personae are a slippery bunch; as he was to comment later in the prefatory note to *Springboard* (1944), poems like "The Satirist" and "The Conscript" were intended as particular portraits with the potential for universalization: "'The Conscript' does not stand for all conscripts but for an imagined individual; any such individual seems to me to have an absolute quality which the definite article recognizes" (7). "The Casualty" is exemplary of this aesthetic: it memorializes MacNeice's school friend Graham Shepard (killed at sea in 1943) and, through its generalizing title, other casualties of the war.[26] Though "To a Communist" lacks the kind of subheading that connects "The Casualty" to Shepard—*"in memoriam G. H. S."* (*Collected Poems* 245)—its echoes of "After they have tired . . . " strongly imply that the communist was Spender.

The only other substantial candidate to have been proposed is Auden. According to Jon Stallworthy, addressing the communist as "my dear" targets the homosexual Auden (154).[27] This is plausible inasmuch as during the early 1930s, Auden seemed to be the model left-leaning intellectual; as Symons recalls, "We never doubted that [Auden] was himself a Party member" (Bucknell and Jenkins 178). Indeed, it could be argued that MacNeice's title satirically recalls Auden's "A Communist to Others."[28] Equally, the straight MacNeice was not averse to mocking the sexual proclivities of his homosexual contemporaries. His account of Oxford in the late 1920s shows that he saw "my dear" as a general marker of homosexuality rather than as the private property of Auden:

> the air was full of the pansy phrase "my dear". I discovered that in Oxford homosexuality and "intelligence", heterosexuality and brawn were almost inexorably paired. This left me out in the cold and I took to drink. (*Strings* 103)

The suggestion that Auden was MacNeice's communist, however, rests on arguments that would work equally well for Spender. During the early 1930s, Spender was as openly homosexual as Auden. Part of the charge of *Poems* was that Spender's love objects were tantalizingly male. In "For T. A. R. H.," addressed to his lover Tony Hyndman, the gender of the subject and the emotional involvement of the speaker are unambiguous: "Even whilst I watch him I am remembering / The quick laugh of the wasp gold eyes . . . love / Is soaked in memory" (36).[29] Published alongside such poems, even a text as ostensibly political as "After they have tired . . ." is inflected with homoerotic resonance, especially in its rhapsodic evocation of the postrevolutionary world. Phrases like "The palpable and obvious love of man for man" (where the physicality of "palpable" is underlined by its being linked with the synonymic "obvious") and "The beautiful generation that shall spring from our sides" (with its suggestion of parthenogenetic reproduction) give the postrevolutionary world a homoerotic flavor. Moreover, E. R. Dodds observes that "Of the so-called 'Thirties poets' [MacNeice] seems to have known only Stephen Spender at all well [during the early 1930s]; his acquaintance with Auden did not ripen into intimacy until later" (115). But the case for Spender can be made most persuasively by the close reading of MacNeice's poem.

Rather than being a general satire of communism, "To a Communist" is cast as a dialogic poem. It responds to "After they have tired . . ." through a discussion of revolutionary metaphorics:

> Your thoughts make shape like snow; in one night only
> The gawky earth grows breasts,
> Snow's unity engrosses
> Particular pettiness of stones and grasses.
> But before you proclaim the millennium, my dear,
> Consult the barometer—
> The poise is perfect but maintained
> For one day only. (*Collected Poems* 22)

Where "Ode" recasts Spender's physical image as a metaphor, "To a Communist" reverses the process. As the commentary in *Modern Poetry* indicates, "After they have tired . . ." uses snow as a broad symbol of social and psychological upheaval. Through the repetition of variants of the key phrase "Clean and equal like the shine from snow," Spender focuses on the sensuous impression made by newly fallen snow. Thus in the first stanza, the "death" of the capitalist conception of the city grins "white through all faces" like snow; similarly in the final stanza, the orgasmic explosion of the new dawn dazes us "with its light like snow." MacNeice ironically paraphrases Spender's "thoughts": the unity of snow absorbs and resolves differences in the perceptual world "of stones and grasses" with the suddenness of revolutionary change: "in one night only /

The gawky earth grows breasts." "Gawky" encapsulates MacNeice's perspective: to the communist, the earth's geophysical particularities are awkward impediments to the more unified (or just, or equal) world which revolutionary change will bring. The feminization of the earth, moreover, mockingly glances at Spender's homoerotic utopia. Each phrase is freighted with a crisp resistance to this alleged unity; note how the half rhyme of "engrosses" with "grasses" undermines the process of absorption it describes. Indeed, the form of "To a Communist" is another illustration of MacNeice's attentiveness to Spender's poetry. As "After they have tired . . . " eschews traditional rhyme and stanzaic patterns while retaining "the reappearing beat of the old verse," so "To a Communist" deftly interweaves short and long lines with sporadic half rhymes. And whereas in "Ode" Spenderesque technique was used to avoid sounding too much like Yeats, here it is adopted for the purpose of mocking Spenderesque politics.

In the second half of the poem, the satiric edge becomes sharper: the snow "millennium" is ridiculed through the reminder that the "poise" of snow is "maintained / For one day only." MacNeice amplifies his point through the patronizing chumminess of calling the communist "my dear." Set against the third stanza of "After they have tired," with its evocation of a new country where equality has suddenly become "palpable," "To a Communist" brings the reader to the "gawky earth" with a bump. Indeed, MacNeice registers his amused disdain for his target's lyrical communism by connecting him to an English middle-class milieu (in the choice of the barometer[30]) and English weather conditions (where snow is unlikely to remain untarnished for more than "one day"). As we shall see, Spender's Englishness as against MacNeice's Irishness was an important component of their rivalry.

As a rebuke to a colleague, "To a Communist" partly confirms Spender's allegations of MacNeice's aloofness. The poem adopts a donnish hauteur for the comic purpose of exposing the silliness of the analogy between snowfall and revolution. It also indicates MacNeice's fascination with snow as a metaphor. This is evident in "Snow," the most celebrated poem in the 1935 volume, in which the incongruous juxtaposition of "snow and pink roses" prompts metaphysical reflection on "The drunkenness of things being various" (*Collected Poems* 30). In this case, snow has ceased to be a political metaphor and is restored to the "collateral and incompatible" world that poem evokes. But "To a Communist" is more than just a satirical squib; its satire depends on MacNeice's literary-critical reading of Spender's text.[31] In this sense, it is a miniature version of debates implicit throughout *Poems*: what subjects should poetry be concerned with, and what are the best treatments of those subjects? This poem addresses the first question by its resistance to a politically engaged poetry, just as "Turf-stacks" and "The Individualist Speaks" point to the limitations of individualism. Indeed, these poems collectively suggest an impasse in MacNeice's aesthetics, alongside his awareness of the limitations of the political alternatives available to him.

§

Spender's review of MacNeice's *Poems* (to which we will return shortly) notes that "MacNeice always knows what he is doing" ("Mr MacNeice's Poems" 17). Indeed, the texts that make up *Poems* are self-conscious in their preoccupation with questions of poetics. As Peter McDonald has argued in relation to the eclogues that begin the volume, "it is possible to see in them the crux of an aesthetic and ideological debate which MacNeice was conducting . . . both with himself and contemporary writing" (20–21). In "An Eclogue for Christmas," the city-dwelling speaker A, reacting against the aestheticism of earlier modernists, complains that he has not "been allowed to be / Myself in flesh or face . . . They have made of me pure form, a symbol or pastiche" (*Collected Poems* 33). In "Eclogue by a Five-barred Gate," Death mocks the aestheticized verse of the shepherds by travestying Yeats's "Easter 1916": "All you do is burke the other and terrible beauty . . . Poetry you think is only the surface vanity . . . The hooks and eyes of words; but it is not that only" (*Collected Poems* 37–38).[32]

As I have suggested, much of the intellectual endeavor of *Poems* is preoccupied with addressing the question of what else poetry might be. Texts like "To a Communist" and "Turf-stacks" frustrate any expectation of an easy resolution to such questions. Joining the Communist Party or turning one's back on abstract thinking are represented as equally bogus alternatives: MacNeice will not allow his subjects or his readers such simplified options. But what is most remarkable about *Poems* is the extent to which MacNeice is capable of turning his critical disdain onto his own formulations. I will conclude by looking at "Wolves" as a poem that not only rejects the by now familiar targets of individualism and communism but also MacNeice's own poetic identity, either as a fallen aesthete or the neo-Heraclitan of "Snow."

The opening stanza of "Wolves" impatiently recapitulates the aesthetic of MacNeice's first volume, *Blind Fireworks* (1929):[33]

> I do not want to be reflective any more
> Envying and despising unreflective things
> Finding pathos in dogs and undeveloped handwriting
> And young girls doing their hair and all the castles of sand
> Flushed by the children's bedtime, level with the shore.
> (*Collected Poems* 29)

"Finding pathos in dogs . . . / And young girls" summarizes an earlier poem, "The Lugubrious, Salubrious Seaside," in which "dogs" tails tick like metronomes" and "bathing girls / Deign to illuminate the sea," while the speaker reflects with an uncertain mixture of aggression and nostalgia on childhood: "Those wooden spades that dig the mind, / Unearthing memories of spades / When we were the protagonists / Flaunting down juvenile parades" (*Collected Poems* 8). "Wolves" rejects such aestheticized retrospection: MacNeice is unwilling to play this poetic game "any more." But this move away from the styles of his undergraduate poems is undercut by the second stanza's rejection of the perspective outlined in poems like "Snow" and "An Eclogue for Christmas":

> The tide comes in and goes out again, I do not want
> To be always stressing either its flux or permanence,
> I do not want to be a tragic or philosophic chorus
> But to keep my eye only on the nearer future
> And after that let the sea flow over us. (29)

Most critics have downplayed this passage as a temporary derogation of habitual modes of thinking (see Marsack 16 and Longley, *Louis MacNeice* 143–44). Though "Wolves" is by no means MacNeice's last word on "the thesis that everything is flux" (*Strings* 96), it is also more than empty attitudinizing. Rather, it suggests that the poetics of flux trailed in *Poems* is as inherently problematic as the nostalgist reflections of *Blind Fireworks.* The stanza asserts that all poetic categories are vulnerable in the face of the incoming sea. Adopting a Heraclitan pose, or that of "a tragic or philosophic chorus," will ultimately be just that: a construction that may not be adequate to the challenges of "the nearer future." It is in this spirit that the final stanza queries the collective ethos:

> Come then all of you, come closer, form a circle,
> Join hands and make believe that joined
> Hands will keep away the wolves of water
> Who howl along our coast. And be it assumed
> That no one hears them among the talk and laughter. (29)

"Wolves" is congruent with poems like "To a Communist" inasmuch as it draws attention to the wishful thinking implicit in communistic aspirations. But it is more complex than the shorter poem: though this passage questions collective solidarity, its focus is not so much the shortcomings of communism as the inevitability of the coming crisis. Indeed, the pathos of the image is that the "make believe" of the close-knit circle is so potentially attractive: note the urgent, would-be seductive imperatives that organize the first line of this stanza. As Terence Brown has observed in relation to "Wolves," though apocalyptic rhetoric is common among writers of the 1930s, "MacNeice is unique . . . in conveying a sense of total doom" (51). This stanza exemplifies that sense: the closed circle of friends will not hear the tidal approach of the "wolves of water." What is so impressive is that the poem's apocalyptic eschews the merely rhetorical by its critique of MacNeice's own poetic poses. The reader is more likely to feel that the crisis is genuine because the writer has not spared his own formulations in his anticipation of the future.

Like other texts in *Poems*, "Wolves" closes with impasse, not resolution: the sea's advance on the shore is imminent; no resolves can stop it. It might then seem to confirm Samuel Hynes's portrait of MacNeice as a chronic melancholic whose lack of conviction is indicative of a pessimistic and ultimately passive response to the upheavals of the 1930s (367–73). As others have observed, Hynes's account depends on the valorization of Auden at the expense of MacNeice.[34] But the articulation of an impasse is not the same thing as the surrender to passivity. Though the advance of the "wolves of water" is inevitable, the poem counsels neither quiescence nor the nostalgia it rejects in the first stanza. Rather, like "To a Communist" and "Turf-stacks," "Wolves" presents a situation that cannot easily be resolved: MacNeice is not giving up, he is attempting to outline the problem—what I have called the impasse—as clearly as possible.

If this suggests that MacNeice consciously played with, and undermined, the role of the disengaged poseur, Spender's reading of MacNeice's

Poems was rather different. For Spender, MacNeice was to remain something of a poseur both as a man and a poet. His review in the October-November 1935 issue of *New Verse* is generally enthusiastic in urging readers to buy *Poems*, yet praise for MacNeice's technical skill is leavened with criticism of his overall approach. Spender claims to refuse to criticize MacNeice's work on the pretext that it "is difficult to 'place'"; his insistence that the review "does not pretend to criticism" ("Mr MacNeice's Poems" 17, 19) may be a prickly response to the claim made in "Poetry To-day" that it "is unconvincing to analyse" Spender (MacNeice, *Criticism* 39). But the review does criticize MacNeice on the grounds that he sacrifices too much for aesthetic effect:

> The impression left by this book is of a series of pictures painted with precision in a very limited range of colours. . . . To say that these pictures are unexceptionally done, is also to question the poet's whole approach to his medium. The fact that Mr MacNeice so abundantly insists on his double (his poet's and his painter's) eye results in the sacrifice of a single image. He often achieves a brilliant, a dazzling line . . . yet he never achieves a crystalline phrase, nor a hard statement. (17–18)

As we have seen, in his critical account of Spender, MacNeice rejected the traditional aspiration to a "crystalline" lyricism. Yet the real force of Spender's critique is that MacNeice offers little more than beautifully painted poetic pictures. Spender implies that MacNeice willfully avoids making the "hard statement[s]" demanded of a politically engaged poetry. Hence his account of the musicality of MacNeice's verse develops into an image of its glamorous, even commercial, slipperiness: "It is too infectious . . . it infects and turns in on itself, like a snake in a Walt Disney film, involved in its own coils" (18). The cartoon snake anticipates a pervasive trend in the reception of MacNeice as an aesthete out of place in a political generation. Yet Spender emphasizes the painterly quality of *Poems* at the expense of any sense of the volume's real intellectual complexity. In short, it is a review that powerfully enacts the ways in which critical judgment can be influenced by personal animosity.

Spender's poem "Louis MacNeice," written long after MacNeice's death, is a franker and more convincing account of the tensions in the relationship between the two poets.[35] He describes MacNeice as "aloof," as "Looking down at you, smiling to himself":

> The superior head slanted back
> With dancing eyes summing you up
> And laughter only just arrested
> At some joke about you, known only to himself
> (Perhaps the cutting phrase sharpening in his forehead)
> He half-beckoned you up into his high mind
> For a shared view of your clumsiness.
> (*Collected Poems 1928–1985*, 177)

The poem focuses on the dynamics of embarrassment: Spender catches the squirming feeling of his own "clumsiness" as set against MacNeice's poised superiority. Two-thirds of the poem makes no reference to MacNeice's poetry, and when Spender finally turns to the poem's ostensible occasion—a reading at which he was to perform "Bagpipe Music"—the vocabulary of MacNeice's text mercilessly exposes Spender's parochialism:

> Now, reading his poem "Bagpipe Music", I don't know how to
> pronounce
> C-e-i-l-i-d-h—nor what it means—
> He looks down from high heaven
> The mocking eyes search-lighting
> My ignorance again. (177–78)

There is something very uneasy about Spender's poem. While it appears to be a memorial to a dead colleague (especially as published in *The Thirties and After*, which explains the circumstances in which it was written), its real focus is Spender's emotional reaction to MacNeice, his unpurged sense that MacNeice retains the high ground—that even dead his "mocking eyes" are able to "search-light" Spender's ignorance and clumsiness. Indeed, it is this unease that makes "Louis MacNeice" an effective poem. Unlike the previous poem in *Collected Poems 1928–1985*, "One More New Botched Beginning," it does not simply reassert the value of MacNeice's life and works.[36] Rather, Spender gives awkward testimony to the problems he found with MacNeice as a man, and ultimately as a poet. The poem's sense of inferiority is precisely located in the Gaelic word "Ceilidh." "Bagpipe Music" evokes the Hebridean communities MacNeice encountered during 1937 while collecting material for his travel book *I Crossed the Minch* (1938); the relevant passage reads "It's no go the gossip column, it's no go the Ceilidh, / All we want is a mother's help and a sugar-stick for the baby" (*Collected Poems* 97). By singling out "Ceilidh," Spender points to the cultural differences between himself and MacNeice: the English writer fails to appreciate the Irish writer's Celtic background and affiliations. Indeed, the comic irony of Spender's passage is intensified by the fact that the half-rhyme with "baby" partly guides the reader's pronunciation of "Ceilidh" in "Bagpipe Music." In "Louis MacNeice," by contrast, the word becomes a dismembered verbal symbol of Spender's failure to understand a fundamental component of MacNeice as the text painfully spells out the letters: "C-e-i-l-i-d-h."

That nationality was an issue between the writers is underlined by a passage in Spender's *Journals*. Immediately after his comment on *The Strings Are False*, Spender recounts a wartime anecdote about MacNeice and a British diplomat. MacNeice is decisively worsted in this encounter: the diplomat identifies MacNeice's northern Irish origins and implies that his detachment confirms "'the story that I have heard that a school of seals went on shore and interbred with the people living on that part of the coast of Ireland'" (*Journals* 264). Spender uses this story to amplify his sense of "Louis's almost cold-blooded air of superiority," but it also indicates the power of the rivalry that "Louis MacNeice" mutes through its focus on Spender's sense of his inferiority (*Journals* 264). Cumulatively, the passage from *Journals* suggests the tensions between Spender and MacNeice, and the extent to which the stereotypical binaries of the "cold-blooded" Ulsterman and the "clumsy" Englishman divided writers of ostensibly similar affiliations.

MacNeice saw Spender as a contemporary with a defined yet limited style, who could be safely used as a model, unlike the more compelling and dangerous Yeats and Eliot. MacNeice's study of Spender's *Poems* furnished him at a pivotal moment in his own development with an example he could successfully emulate. Yet Spender represented more than a stylistic influence. For MacNeice, he also embodied the intellectual and poetic pitfalls of communism. But it is misleading to characterize MacNeice as a knee-jerk political skeptic. He largely shared his communist contemporaries' suspicion of capitalism and was critical throughout *Poems* of bourgeois taste and politics. Collegial rivalry allowed MacNeice to see in Spender's work an example both of what could be done poetically and what should not be trusted politically. In turn, MacNeice's reflection on Spender's more politically engaged work enabled him to articulate both his resistance to such optimism and his foreboding for the future.

Notes

1. See Hynes for the major "Auden-centred" reading of the 1930s. Cunningham 13–35 and McDonald 4–9 provide important riders to Hynes's model.

2. The dust jacket of the 1934 second edition begins with the comment from the *Fortnightly Review* that *Poems* is "An unmistakable declaration of genius."

3. For details of MacNeice's and Spender's careers in the early 1930s, see Stallworthy 131–58 and Leeming 55–71.

4. Mary's stepfather's name was in fact Beazley; see Stallworthy 121–24.

5. "Autobiography" was written in September 1940, roughly the same period at which he was at work on *The Strings Are False*. See *Strings* 11–12 for E. R. Dodds's account of the genesis of the prose text.

6. In this sense, "Autobiography" accords with Freud's classic account of the workings of obsessional repression in the "Rat Man" case study (*Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis* [1909]). Contrasting the behavior of obsessives with that of hysterics, who forget what they repress, Freud writes: "The trauma, instead of being forgotten, is deprived of its affective cathexis; so that what remains in consciousness is nothing but its ideational content, which is perfectly colorless and is judged to be unimportant" (76). The point here is not that MacNeice was an obsessive like "Rat Man" but rather that "Autobiography" poetically enacts a similar kind of repression.

7. See in particular *The Destructive Element* ch. 13.

8. In fact, *The Destructive Element* is less doctrinaire than MacNeice allows for. In discussing *The Orators*, Spender observes "It seems likely . . . that the communist explanation of our society is not adequate to produce considerable art: it is only adequate to produce art to serve its purposes" (254).

9. See for example Cunningham 32. More generally, see Brown, where MacNeice's habitual lack of and suspicion of conviction is generalized into a thoroughgoing philosophical skepticism.

10. In *Collected Poems*, these texts are separated by four pages (18–22), following MacNeice's own resequencing of his earlier volumes for *Collected Poems 1925–1948*; see Dodds's editorial preface for a rationale of these decisions (*Collected Poems* xv–xvi). While Dodds's strategy was sensible in the late 1960s (when an updated *Collected Poems* was urgently needed), general readers and specialists would now be best served by a collected edition that would reprint the poems in the sequence they originally appeared in individual volumes. This would have the advantage of reprinting the many poems rejected by MacNe-

ice in 1949 (see *Collected Poems* 560–61 for details), as well as presenting the oeuvre in a more historically nuanced form. As it stands, Dodds's edition conflates the editorial decisions MacNeice took for *Collected Poems 1925–1948* with the straight reprinting of the five volumes MacNeice published between 1951 and 1963.

11. This approach has a long history: see Powell 603. For more recent commentary, see Marsack 7–8; Longley, *Louis MacNeice* 43; and McDonald 32.

12. See MacNeice's "Poem." Apart from the addition of a few commas, the title is the only change MacNeice made to the poem for volume publication.

13. See also MacNeice's review of Auden's *Look, Stranger!* (MacNeice, *Criticism* 76).

14. See Hynes (65–67) for the impact of the collapse of the Labour government on the "Auden Generation."

15. See Stallworthy 167 and MacNeice, *Criticism* 10n1. The texts in *Poems* were written over a longer period of time, between 1929 and 1935; see *Collected Poems* v–vi.

16. For the full review, see *Criticism* 101–03. I have corrected Cunningham's misquotation (reading "make" for "made").

17. "For about a year and a half I thought of Shelley as *the* great poet. While I was 17 I wrote, as I think many people do when they are 17, a number of Shelleyan poems defying or renouncing everyday life and its codes" (*Modern Poetry* 50).

18. Both "Trapeze" and "Insidiae" were dropped from *Collected Poems 1925–1948;* another Eliotic poem, "Everyman his own Pygmalion," was—wisely—not reprinted after its initial appearance in *New Verse* no. 1 (Jan. 1933), 10–11. For Eliot's influence, see "Eliot and the Adolescent" (1948) (MacNeice, *Criticism* 148–53) and Marsack 3–4.

19. The textual history of Spender's *Poems* is yet more complicated than MacNeice's. The texts of *Poems* (1933) as they appear in *Collected Poems 1928–1985* are often substantially revised; key poems (for example "After they have tired of the brilliance of cities") are omitted altogether. The difficulties are concisely stated by O'Neill and Reeves: until the earlier—and often stronger—versions of *Poems* are reprinted, interested readers will have to search out original editions (35–36). I therefore quote from the second, expanded, edition of *Poems* published in 1934.

20. For "Ode," I quote directly from *Poems* because Dodds's *Collected Poems*

prints a stanza break between "By taking it to pieces" and "The marriage of Cause and Effect," though he retains the semicolon after "pieces" (*Collected Poems* 58). Dodds was probably misled by *Collected Poems 1925–1948*, where these lines straddle separate pages (45–46). The stanza is also spread over two pages in *Poems*, but there is no indication of a break between "Let him not part asunder" and "Wisdom for him." Given its subject matter, wisdom would indicate that the stanza should not be parted asunder.

21. See MacNeice's comment on Spender's political miniepic *Vienna* (1934): "Unsuccessful, I think (still too *voulu*)" (*Criticism* 42). *"Voulu"* implies that Spender was trying too hard; certainly, *Vienna*'s amalgam of modernist collage and revolutionary idealism was unlikely to have appealed to MacNeice.

22. For the full text of the poem, see Spender, *Poems* 47–48. It can also be found in *Collected Poems 1928–1953* (49–50), though this version is marred by rewriting.

23. For Spender's protracted flirtation with communism, see Leeming 52–54, 63–64, and 93–103. Spender did not become a party member until 1937 and the publication by the Left Book Club of *Forward from Liberalism*, though he had been advocating revolutionary arguments for a long time before this.

24. See Roberts 86, 95–96. Both were collected in *Poems*.

25. See McKinnon 96–97; Longley, *Louis MacNeice* 43; and McDonald 30.

26. For Shepard's death, and a reading of "The Casualty," see Stallworthy 319–22.

27. Stallworthy also suggests Anthony Blunt as a "less likely addressee" (154n).

28. Though not collected until *Look! Stranger* (1936), Auden's poem was written in August 1932 and published a month later in *Twentieth Century*; it achieved wider circulation still when republished in *New Country* (1933); see Fuller 163. "To a Communist" is dated to 1933 by Dodds; it first appeared in *The Criterion* 13.51, published in January 1934. By this time, MacNeice would have been familiar with both Auden's poem and Spender's: "After they have tired . . . " appeared in the first edition of Spender's *Poems* (1933), published in January 1933.

29. This poem was added to the second edition of *Poems*. For Spender and Hyndman, see Leeming 74–88. Also relevant in this context is Spender's early novel *The Temple*, whose primary focus is homosexual relationships in Weimar Germany.

30. The communist's barometer is worth comparing with that of "Mayfly," a love poem, which begins "Barometer of my moods today, mayfly, / Up and

down one among a million" (*Collected Poems* 13–14). Though "To a Communist" and "Mayfly" represent different poles within *Poems*, like "To a Communist," "Mayfly" evokes a pastoral idea of England, and in this case Oxford; see also *Strings* 122.

31. See Longley, ""Something Wrong Somewhere?" for an account of MacNeice's criticism, which argues that "literary criticism is rarely a wholly separable category for MacNeice" (56).

32. See McDonald 22 for the view that this passage attacks Auden's therapeutic model of poetry and the *New Country* notion that art is about communication.

33. See MacNeice's foreword: "I have called this collection *Blind Fireworks* because they go quickly through their antics against an important background, and fall and go out quickly" (qtd. in Stallworthy 131).

34. See Cunningham 16–17 for a critique of Hynes's view of the 1930s as "an affair of a group of chums clustered about their mutual friend"; see McDonald 4–9 for consideration of how ideas of nationality contribute to Hynes's caricature of MacNeice as a "professional lacrymose Irishman" (334).

35. In *The Thirties and After*, the poem appears under the different title "Seeing MacNeice Stand Before Me" (265).

36. This poem elegizes MacNeice alongside Merleau-Ponty and Bernard Spencer: "Louis caught cold in the rain, Bernard fell from a train door. // Their lives are now those poems that were / Pointers to the poems they made their lives." (*Collected Poems 1928–1985,* 176).

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Heroes and Homosexuals: Education and Empire in E. M. Forster

Quentin Bailey

> He had brought out the man in Alec, and now it was Alec's turn to bring out the hero in him. . . . They must live outside class, without relations or money; they must work and stick to each other till death. But England belonged to them.
>
> —Forster, *Maurice* 208–09

In October 1912, the successful, 33-year-old novelist E. M. Forster sailed from England in search of material for an Indian novel. Conventional wisdom has it that he was suffering something of an artistic crisis at the time: the success of *Howards End* in 1910 had placed tremendous pressures on the young writer, and 1911 had been a "terrible year on the whole" (Furbank 204). To recover his creative impulses, according to this narrative of discovery, Forster traveled to India, taking extensive notes and writing frequently to friends and family about his trip. On his return to England, he wrote the first draft of an openly homosexual novel, *Maurice*, in a matter of weeks. Eleven years later, after a second trip to the subcontinent and a devastating war, Forster finally wrote his much-acclaimed Indian novel in January 1924. It was published in a matter of months. *Maurice*, by contrast, remained hidden from all but Forster's closest friends until his death in 1970. It was published a year later to mixed reviews. Critical reception of the two novels has followed a similar trajectory: *A Passage to India* is taught in both canonical and postcolonial classrooms; *Maurice* remains primarily the province of queer studies. Pan-

Twentieth-Century Literature 48.3 Fall 2002 324

oramic studies surveying Forster's oeuvre build a narrative to the apex that is *A Passage to India*, relegating *Maurice* to the section on "Minor Fiction & Short Stories."

And yet, for all this difference in writing, publication, reception, and appropriation, the two novels are inextricably linked by the trips to India. This relationship, however, is hidden behind the fiction(s) of modernism. It is a textual relationship that cannot speak its name until the modernist aesthetics of alienation and exile begin to wane. But it is a relationship whose political power becomes apparent as we read backwards from *A Passage to India* to *Maurice*, examining the system of education in the imperial age that helped construct the possibilities for both these novels of unspeakable love. The textual space within which Maurice exists is revealed, in this reading, to be a result of the educational practices of a period that sought to align national interests with an upper-middle-class agenda. In its construction of the socially unspeakable, *Maurice* reveals the limits of representation that the Anglo-Saxon myth of Englishness, born of postmutiny imperialism, places on narrative modernist texts—limits that also construct, in *A Passage to India*, the literally unspeakable (the "ou-boum" of the caves). Finally, reading *A Passage to India* and *Maurice* together discloses the extent to which educational practice—which sought to control social and racial differences within a narrow conception of sexual identity—encouraged the development of an aesthetic we have come to know, broadly, as modernism.

In this essay, then, I first account for *A Passage to India*'s canonization by comparing it to *Heart of Darkness,* and then situate these novels within certain historical and educational trends of the period. Understanding cultural productions in light of both literary and educational texts, we can grasp what Ronald Schleifer calls modernism's "apocalyptic sense of the new" (*Modernism* 68) in its relation to a specific racial, social, and sexual hierarchy. In *Maurice,* the discursive intersection of literature and education—which takes the form of a collision between canonically sanctioned meanings (of origins and influences) and alternative historical figurations (of empires and identities)—discloses the material limits of modernist representation.

Colonial texts, canonical acceptance

Maurice was written in 1913, falling neatly between what are arguably the two major works of colonial fiction in English: *Heart of Darkness* and *A Passage to India.*[1] Conrad's tale of Africa was published in 1899, Forster's account of India in 1924. A quarter of a century, several major wars, and the majority of the great works of the high-modernist period separate these two books. The historical and linguistic position of these two novels—which depict the experiences of the colonial master in foreign climes—opens up an important perspective on *Maurice*, a novel that appears to have only a coincidental, chronological relationship to the imperial project.

In their ambivalent attitude to the announced achievements of the imperial period, *Heart of Darkness* and *A Passage to India* permit interpretive readings that articulate a critique of colonial practice that details the "human cost" of economically exploitative power formations. As artifacts of the modernist period, these texts can thus be read to deploy a humanist critique of the imperial world order—a critique that opposes the narratives of social and racial progress that helped construct and justify the late nineteenth-century land rushes of the European powers and their upper-middle-class agents. It is also possible, after a rereading of *Maurice,* to detect in these two canonical novels a historical narrative of modernist canonicity, a narrative in which the traditionally modernist themes of exile and displacement are revealed to be sublimations of unanswerable questions about human agency in repressed communities. In this narrative, the rulers' anxieties in encountering subject people determine the modernist themes of alienation and exile, and the mechanism that makes such a transfer possible is a notion of sexuality conceived of in terms of race and education.

Heart of Darkness and *A Passage to India* share a second striking similarity: both novels center on uninterpretable utterances, unspeakable words with the potential to wipe out history and tradition, class and money. Kurtz's final gasping breath, in which Marlow catches the exclamation "the horror, the horror," becomes, a quarter of a century later, the enigmatic, resounding cry of the Marabar Caves: "ou-boum." Bette London notes of *A Passage to India* that "critics have generally acknowledged that the central event of *Passage* is a non-event—a 'story' that gives voice to the British fear of contagion . . . [since] the claim echoes from a chamber where all voices sound the same" (86). This fear of infection—by native diseases or its mental counterpart, non-Western consciousnesses—determines, in other words, the limits of communication. This terror of contamination from outside will finally be mastered only by a process that posits fractures within the Western consciousness itself. To put it bluntly, cultural alienation (conceived largely in terms of an "unspeakable" sexuality) constantly replaces the anxiety created by geographic displacement and its attendant politics of domestic brutality and imperial colonialism.

Neither Marlow's utterance nor the echo of the Marabar Caves provides the reader with an interpretive position from which to understand the attendant experience. Instead, both sounds force the reader away from the possibility of a real experience.[2] In *Heart of Darkness* the record of Kurtz's experience—"horror . . . horror"—necessitates a lie to the Intended. Marlow, the proverbial straight talker, cannot report Kurtz's referentless words, preferring instead to pretend that Kurtz's last words were the name of his beloved. What horror? Whose horror? It is not even clear how to frame a question that might allow a coherent answer. As Schleifer notes in *Rhetoric and Death*, Kurtz's cry,

> in its liquid aspirants, is indistinguishable from breath, indistinguishable from the noisy nonsense of stertorous breathing. . . . That is, his "words" may not be enunciated words at all, but simply noise that Marlow hears—arbitrarily—as words. (192–93)

Unable to rephrase Kurtz's apparent report in a comprehensible fashion, Marlow lies, hoping to avoid completely the rupture that has occurred in the process of signification. In *A Passage to India*, a similarly uninterpretable utterance becomes the battleground for various power formations at the trial as the voices of Adela Quested and Dr. Aziz are appropriated by the established discourses of law, colonialism, and nationalism. If *Heart of Darkness* offers the lie as the only possible answer to an utterance that has no obvious referential base in experience, *A Passage to India* moves the debate beyond the realm of true-false dichotomies. Ou-boum is an utterance whose meaning can only be constructed by subsequent acts of appropriation.

And, of course, in a parallel that is in no way purely coincidental, canonization itself is always an act of appropriation. The ou-boum of *A Passage to India* is read to be the heart of the story as the novel becomes a canonical text: its acceptance within the canon is predicated on its deflection of specific historical injustices in favor of exemplary linguistic indeterminacy. Thus, even as it makes available a critique of the early twentieth-century liberal humanism that informs the famous "only connect" injunction of *Howards End*, *A Passage to India* constructs the modernist project as a linguistic and aesthetic mode of inquiry rather than as a historical and political choice. Utterances from "foreign" civilizations are frighteningly incomprehensible to imperial, upper-class Western ears, which choose, instead, to ponder the pervasiveness of linguistic indeterminacy. In this fictional world of literary modernism, there is little room for speech, and none for a new, groundbreaking speech that would allow Aziz and Fielding to "be friends now" (*Passage* 282). The unspeakable, it would seem, contaminates not only encounters involving both race and gender (as between Aziz and Adela in the Marabar Caves) but also the privileged relationship between two men (Aziz and Fielding).

The "history" of this inability—to hear foreign noises and to find a language for friendship—is a recurrent preoccupation in Forster's work and one that begins to reveal the self-perpetuating relationship between "colonial" violence and the "modernist" aesthetic that the chronology of Forster's published fiction hides so well. The received meanings of *Maurice*—written 10 years before *A Passage to India* but published some 45 years later—are constructed after the success of the canonical project, concealing the discourses that participated in Maurice's textual figuration, especially the connection between colonial violence and modernist aesthetic. This unspoken connection is pervasive in modernism. In an era obsessed with displacement and return, alienation and home, the colonies are all but nonexistent as substantial textual locations within literary modernism. Ironically, this pervasive omission is parodied in the Schlegel sisters in *Howards End* who "would at times dismiss the whole British Empire with a puzzled, if reverent, sigh" (22). The sisters prefer, instead, to focus on "unrelated" issues like temperance, sexual equality, and artistic productions. It is to this apparent lack of any relationship between temperance, sexual equality, and artistic productions and issues of social and imperial control that I turn in the following sections. The cultural assumptions that permitted and encouraged such an unspeakable wall ("a puzzled, if reverent, sigh") between domestic issues and colonial experiences were forged in the new educational practices of the imperial period.

Global power, local practices

In 1913 (the year that *Maurice* was written), the British Empire encompassed approximately 20 percent of the world's land area and 25 percent of its population. The residents of Britain accounted for slightly less than 8 percent of the imperial population—some 30 million out of 400 million. Trade with extra-European territories accounted for 60 percent of British trade—"a proportion far greater than that of any other major industrializing power" (Cain 32).[3] Between 1853 and 1913, some 5 1/2 million UK citizens migrated to destinations within the empire—approximately 15 percent of the population of the period. Thus, although the number of civil servants from Britain was relatively small compared to other imperial powers,[4] it would be wrong to conclude that contact between the British and colonial people and settings was limited. In fact, contact was engendered not only by migration but also by scientists, lawyers, construction workers, and engineers who went abroad on a contract basis.

The empire was, of course, not solely an economic fact. To administer this enormous, far-flung empire, the British education system was required to produce, as Lord Curzon noted at the Imperial Press Conference meeting at Oxford in 1909, "governors and administrators and judges . . . teachers and preachers and lawyers" (qtd. in Said 213). Real changes in the colonial situation—created by the decimation of the English aristocratic-military class during the Crimean War (1853–56), the assumption by the crown of direct control of India in 1858, and the rapid expansion of British holdings in Africa from the mid-1800s—occurred simultaneously with developments in the field of education. Since it was partly in order to meet the growing need for bureaucrats that access to education was broadened through a series of Acts of Parliament and Royal Commissions,[5] a specific curriculum was established to ensure that these future rulers and clerks of the empire would be competent to the task. As the Earl of Meath asked rhetorically, "If the white men and women of the British Empire are idle, soft, selfish, hysterical and undisciplined, are they likely to rule well?" (qtd. in Castle 23).

To meet these educational needs, textbooks were produced which, as Kathryn Castle has argued, built on the exploits of British historical figures in order to secure a consensus about "the splendor of heroism, the worth of unselfishness and loyalty to an ideal, and the meaning of cruelty and cowardice" (22). Readings from the imperial past were chosen which "provided lessons on nationality" and demonstrated "what was best in Britain's national character" (24). Specifically, the British education system of the imperial age focused on producing a shared consensus about the values that were worth fighting for. This emphasis was apparent across the curriculum: from the 1890s "the Empire became a focus for teaching in geography, history, aspects of English (readers often included Imperial poetry and prose), and religious studies" (Mackenzie 221). Crucially, altruism and responsibility in the face of adversity were elevated to a supreme level, a tendency that reaches its apotheosis in Kipling's much-repeated poem "The White Man's Burden": "Take up the White Man's burden, / And reap his old reward— / The blame of those ye better / The hate of those ye guard" (479).

In classrooms, historical readers emphasized the supremacy of these standards of behavior and linked them to a rhetoric of racial superiority that was frequently couched in terms of a mythic Anglo-Saxon identity. To spell out exactly which values should be upheld and which deplored, countless textbooks and readers referred to native leaders as "'weak', 'cruel', 'debauched', 'effeminate', 'despotic', 'stormy', 'treacherous', 'vicious' and 'monstrous'" (Castle 32), and contrasted them with colonial rulers who demonstrated true "British" character.[6] This practice, it should be emphasized, not only secured stable administrators for the colonies but also exerted a controlling influence over the newly educated masses. The education of potential colonial administrators thus served a dual purpose: the maintenance of the economic and social order at home and the training of imperial bureaucrats. John Cell notes this overlap: "the same class structure and educational system produced not only the Imperial governing elite but bankers, church officials, government ministers, and civil servants in British domestic society" (233). Schoolchildren were trained in the discourse of empire so that, as colonial administrators, they could ensure the continued economic success of Britain;[7] those of their colleagues left behind in Britain would share their understanding of Anglo-Saxon norms and the need to deal fairly but firmly in the face of native intrigue.

Nor was knowledge about the empire and the proper way to act limited to classroom reading: popular boys' fiction of the period was full of tales of heroism on dark continents. These adventure stories played a prominent role in the life of many schoolboys, as Martin Green has detailed: "Both Winston Churchill and Graham Greene have mentioned the importance of Haggard's Umslopogaas in their fantasy life as boys" (85). Kipling, perhaps, played an even greater role in conditioning British readers, as Leonard Woolf—who used to go riding with Forster on Putney Common—noted of his Anglo-Indian associates:

> the white people were also in many ways astonishingly like characters in a Kipling story. I could never make up my mind whether Kipling had molded his characters accurately in the image of Anglo-Indian society or whether we were molding our characters accurately in the image of a Kipling story.
> (qtd. in London 71)

Quite obviously, adventure stories "were understood (implicitly) to answer to the political needs of imperialist nations and their ruling classes" (Green 82). Imperial effects, in other words, were apparent across a broad array of cultural forms, determining the vocabulary with which the ruling classes understood themselves and their subjects.

As several critics have noted, there is every indication that the period after about 1900 saw a significantly greater emphasis laid on "traditional Anglo-Saxon values," particularly in the educational arena. Kathryn Castle has delineated the increasing jingoism of school textbooks in the period immediately prior to the First World War, concluding that, with regard to the representation of Indians in historical readers, "while the image of India and her peoples had always been co-opted in the texts to support the intervention of the British, this process became extraordinarily self-serving by 1914" (36). Not only were Indian subjects shown to be their own worst enemies, but British heroism and good intentions became the focus of many readings to the point that, as Castle notes, the

> *Oxford Survey of the British Empire* published in 1914 . . . admitted that a concentration on the "heroism of the British" meant that a study of the incident [the Mutiny] "added to rather than diminished British prestige."   (36)

This increasingly "patriotic" discourse was a programmed response to two related but distinct pressures. On the one hand, the ruling classes were subject to an increasing level of anxiety about their ability to maintain political dominance. This fear was fueled by a variety of events, including, among others, the Boer War in South Africa (1899–1902), the

US eclipsing the UK as the principal world economic power in 1895, the increasing financial and military threat of a newly unified Germany, the death of Victoria in 1901, and the growing fear of national degeneracy at home.[8] On the other hand, the convincing electoral victory of the Liberals in 1906 went a long way toward uniting the country behind one imperial policy after a sustained polarization of views. As Ronald Hyam has argued, the victory of the Liberals, while ensuring the end of the "grand imperialism" of the Unionists in favor of a more democratic commonwealth ideal, also put an end to the more aggressive denunciations of imperial rule:

> Most Conservatives, except a diehard, imperial-federationist group, conceded defeat. The future would lie with the Liberals' loosely structured "Commonwealth of free nations" . . . and the Labour Party became more Imperial minded. (53)[9]

Even the nascent Labour Party, as Nicholas Owen has noted, tended to find it politically expedient to conform to the dominant discourse of the period, one that directed any criticisms at "speculators and financiers"(191) rather than the imperial government.

It is not altogether surprising, therefore, in this period of anxiety, pessimism, and bipartisan agreement on imperial matters, that the official organs of epistemic control (the state, the school, and the church) came increasingly to use a rhetoric of racial superiority to justify their position and try to control—through the development of a consensual view of history—divisive elements at home and abroad.[10] Whether articulated by science or the church, school, or the state, the dominant political discourse defined the Anglo-Saxon norm more and more narrowly. Thus, although the parliamentary debates on domestic and European issues were fraught and highly charged, a variety of social, economic, and political factors combined to produce a general consensus on imperial policy and, perhaps more significantly, on its representation and justification in educational texts.

This increasingly narrow definition of the "ideal man," the embodiment of the Anglo-Saxon character, that accompanied this increasingly jingoistic discourse was not, of course, completely totalizing. In the British ruling class, the brutality of the South African War certainly created a temporary opposition to the colonial system. And, although the factors identified above ensured that this threat was largely contained within a few years, oppositional positions remained possible—even if, as we shall see in Forster's writing, the stances from which this opposition could be voiced were severely circumscribed. The fact that much of the imperial rhetoric was a response to forces emanating from the colonies meant, furthermore, that certain positions might be misrecognized, thereby briefly allowing a counterhegemonic positioning: attributes ascribed to foreign inhabitants by the official discourses of state control could be redirected by modernist artists toward local residents and valorized in surprising ways.

Forster, clearly, was aware of the related domestic and imperial interests that came, through the medium of education, to focus on the values of hard work and commitment—values, we should note, that linked empire, education, social policy, and literature. The middle classes, Forster wrote,

> gained wealth by the Industrial Revolution, political power by the Reform Bill of 1832; they are connected with the rise and organization of the British Empire; they are responsible for the literature of the nineteenth century. Solidity, caution, integrity, efficiency. Lack of imagination, hypocrisy.
> ("Notes on the English Character" 3)

Famously, Forster accused the educational systems of the time of retarding the emotional development of schoolboys:

> And they go forth into a world that is not entirely composed of public-school men or even of Anglo-Saxons, but of men who are as various as the sands of the sea. . . . They go forth into it with well-developed bodies, fairly developed minds, and undeveloped hearts. (5)

This is not to say, as Forster is at pains to point out, that the English character is necessarily unemotional, but that it is stunted by an educational practice that encourages calm during physical emergencies—exactly the temperament thought to be required in hot, hostile lands. As Forster puts it, the regimen of discipline and work produces a "nervous system" that "acts promptly and feels slowly" (7). Educational practice thus created a common imperial purpose that both maintained existing domestic class structures and shored up the imperial project. And it was against this structure that *Maurice*—whose hero is, after all, an Anglo-

Saxon with a well-developed body, fairly developed mind, and undeveloped heart—can be seen to act.

Indeed, from a certain perspective, *Maurice* charts the almost perfect functioning of the educational institutions of the age—and, in so doing, exposes the imperial projects of domination and exploitation that were so central to the establishment of widespread educational access in England in the late nineteenth century. At both his prep school and at Sunnington, a public school, Maurice is constantly pressured to "join" the ranks of those demonstrating the true Anglo-Saxon character: to be a "good citizen" (16), "brave" (17), and "sympathetic" (19). From his prep school master, Mr. Ducie, he learns the lessons of love: to be "chaste with asceticism" (19) and to strive for the "love a noble woman, to protect and serve her" (19). At Sunnington, he learns the value of a "bright friendly face," the "backbone of the school" (25), and does things because they are "proper" (22). The object, clearly, is to produce a "quiet, honourable, prosperous" (135) member of society. To counter these strict stereotypes—defined to create normative Anglo-Saxon rulers—Forster was forced to focus, in his fictional work, on largely familiar, domestic settings with largely normal characters. In the colonies, Anglo-Saxons confronted only the unspeakable murmurs of other worlds—the horrifying breath of the Congo or the echoing ou-boum of the Marabar Caves—but in the Home Counties these exemplary Anglo-Saxons could be more closely inspected and their "educated" constitution examined.

Textual positions, sexual identities

Both *Heart of Darkness* and *A Passage to India* are somewhat unusual in their creation of a textual space whose strangeness is largely the function of the characters' actual geographic displacement from "home." By contrast, as the catalyst for psychological change, most canonical works of the period rely on cultural or social displacement within a familiar geographic locale constructed by the imperial needs of the era. *Maurice* is a clear example, though not the only one in Forster's work. *Where Angels Fear to Tread* suggests that local issues were liable to be interrogated intensely, out of all proportion to their value, because of foreign concerns. Mrs. Herriton's curt discussion with her cook is a case in point:

> she spoke just too much, and the cook said that if she could not give satisfaction she had better leave. A small thing at hand is

> greater than a great thing remote, and Lilia, misconducting herself upon a mountain in Central Italy, was immediately hidden. (18)

Reading Forster's earlier writings reveals that the disruptive forces unleashed by the imperial experience–and represented within the Indian novel as noncommunication between civilizations–were not simply "unrecognized" in other works but were sublimated into the expression of "deviant" relationships between characters in largely familiar, comforting settings. The arrogance and anxiety of the imperial period produced an aesthetic that found in the genteel society of Edwardian England a tapestry of competing discourses that was just as useful to the purposes of modernity—in its pursuit of those "collisions of past and present" (Schleifer, *Modernism* 68) that Schleifer sees as a distinctive feature of modernism—as were the plains of India or the rivers of Africa. In novel after novel, Forster's heroes and heroines are disturbed in their own backyards by characters emerging from lower social situations. Yet in all these "domestic" encounters, there is a trace of the imperial project. Gino, the happy-go-lucky lower-class Italian in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is "not particularly clean" and does not have "the face of a gentleman"(28). Is he a "dirty" native or an "unrefined" member of the lower classes? It is hard to tell: a "cruel, vicious fellow" (118), he is "poor," "cunning," and "indolent" (39)—an epithet applied automatically by many school textbooks to "natives."

Similarly, Leonard Bast, the determined clerk from *Howards End,* has a problem with concepts—"he could not string them together into a sentence" (31)—and is suspected of being a kleptomaniac by Mrs. Munt: ignorant and quick fingered, he would surely be at home in the London underworld or the Indian subcontinent. Once he is welcomed by the Schlegel sisters, however, his "primitive good looks"(85) come to the fore. The figuration of these characters marks the limits of the colonial experience: the anxiety of noncommunication expressed in *A Passage to India* arises, in these earlier novels, from social relationships within the domestic sphere, social relationships whose potential for subversiveness was largely limited to sexual behavior. Indeed, Maurice's overnight encounter with the lower-class Alec appears to take him to a foreign country: at breakfast the following morning, "he spoke to a race whose nature and numbers were unknown, and whose very food tasted poisonous" (175).

In other words, the works of Forster might be said to master the potentially contaminating discourses of race and class by displacing them onto various familiar environments: Cambridge, Sawston, London, Monteriano, Penge. These recognizable "home" sites would be less textually disturbing than the exotic, uncomfortable spaces of the colonies or the depressing, discomforting prisons of the slums. Thus the Home Counties, more than India or the Congo, offered an experimental field for formal innovation. In a spectacularly depressing irony, the shining light of British civilization fell not on the brutally repressed subjects living in foreign climes or miners' hovels in Nottingham but on the imperial masters and their sexual peccadilloes at the manor. This defensive transposition from the "colonial" anxiety to modernist alienation was not confined to Forster: it is the necessary consequence of the modernist aesthetic that is, as Jameson has noted, "organically linked to the conception of a unique self and private identity" (114)—a conception of the self that relies on the exclusion of possibly contaminating influences from "abroad." The discursive structuring of these "foreign" influences—particularly as it informs canonical, colonial texts—determines the movement from "colonial" practices of control to policings of sexual identity.

This sublimation—from the anxiety born of colonial rule to an intense focus on Anglo-Saxon sexual identity—was mediated by the idea of work. Whereas the natives had a tendency to sloth and indolence, the British colonist understood the redemptive power of work.[11] Paul Wilcox, the younger, impecunious son in *Howards End* who is trying to make a career for himself in Nigeria, is described in these very terms by his mother:

> [h]e doesn't want the money, it is the work he wants, though it is beastly work—dull country, dishonest natives, an eternal fidget over fresh water and food. A nation who can produce men of that sort may be proud. No wonder England has become an Empire. (82)

What makes the fraudulence of this statement particularly obvious—revealing the rapacious economic interest underlying protestations of Protestant ethics—is that the reader has already been informed by this point in the narrative that "Paul hasn't a penny" (17).

In *Maurice*, however, the value of work is seen rather differently. No longer simply the ideology of a self-interested imperial class, work is figured as an intervening force between the individual and his or her desires. Maurice, the slow-witted, emotionally stunted product of the public school system, gradually comes to realize his homosexuality, largely through the intervention of Clive, his first love. But, after a three-year affair with Maurice, Clive "changes" and announces his intention to marry. Having lost his first true love and unable to see any chance for finding another in his homophobic society, Maurice turns to work, not only the work of the commercial and financial world but also the all-encompassing, disciplined effort to engage continuously in useful activities. His choice of activities is striking:

> He joined the Territorials—hitherto he had held off on the ground that the country can only be saved by conscription. He supported the social work even of the Church. He gave up Saturday golf in order to play football with the youths of the College Settlement in South London, and his Wednesday evenings in order to teach arithmetic and boxing to them. . . . He cut down his expenses that he might subscribe more largely to charities—to preventive charities: he would not give a halfpenny to rescue work. (126–27)

This ritual was all part of Maurice's effort to practice the minor arts of life that he had neglected during his time away from normal society with Clive: "punctuality, courtesy, patriotism, chivalry even" (125). Is it purely coincidental that homosexuality was held to be the consequence of tardiness, rudeness, (foreign) nationalism, and effeminacy? And that these qualities were often ascribed to nonwhite or lower-class members of the British Empire (that is, those designated as inferior by the master code)? By focusing on hard work, a privileged mode of existence in the imperial realm, Maurice hopes to overcome his surprisingly "native" predilections. In effect, Maurice strives to become the "ideal man" that Mr. Ducie had sketched for him at preparatory school: "chaste with asceticism" who would, one day, "love a noble woman . . . protect and serve her"(19)—a very white British man, in other words, of the late nineteenth century and one who would surely have nothing to do with an amber-hued gamekeeper. This movement, in which colonial tensions (between the ruling class and the native subject in his guise as a gamekeeper) are domesticated, marks a larger process in which the dangerous, uncontrollable dislocations of the colonial encounters are transformed into concerns about specifically upper-class European practices. Nor was this limited to Forster: Lady Chatterley's affair with the gamekeeper Mellors is played out against the strike-ravaged background of the Nottingham coal mines.

The history of *Maurice* is, of course, closely tied to the question of Forster's liberal humanism and the rampant homophobia of early twentieth-century Britain. It is also a text that draws out and highlights the tensions inherent within the discourses of the dominant cultural institutions, tensions that helped construct a modernist barrier to a strong interrogation of political-power practices. Not simply a novel for "a happier year" (4), *Maurice* gives a glimpse of the moves that the dominant discourse allowed its subjects in their pursuit of freedom. Indeed, in the very fact of *Maurice*'s posthumous publication we can perhaps begin to see the extent to which the displaced colonial tensions of the imperial period forced Forster to an examination of a sexuality that was beyond the mores of his era. So powerful, in other words, were the impulses generated by the colonial encounter—and we shall shortly examine Forster's own colonial sexual encounter—that Forster was able to write, but not publish, an openly homosexual text.

Forster's writing of *Maurice* some six months after returning from his first trip to India becomes, then, more than simply a chronological coincidence. For, following the tendency for modernist texts to seem to avoid imperial complications, *Maurice* is cleared—by both commentators and Forster himself—of any contagion by imperial forces, despite the fact that he had just returned from a trip to India that would, ultimately, produce his masterpiece. Forster's own discussion of the provenance of *Maurice* is well known. As he puts it in the "Terminal Note" to the novel,

> [i]t was the direct result of a visit to Edward Carpenter at Milthorpe . . . he was a believer in the Love of Comrades, whom he sometimes called Uranians. It was this last aspect of him that attracted me in my loneliness. . . . I approached him through Lowes Dickinson, and as one approaches a savior. . . . It must have been the second or third visit to the shrine that the spark was kindled and he and his comrade George Merrill combined to make a profound impression on me and to touch a creative spring. George Merrill also touched my backside. . . . The sensa-

> tion was unusual and I still remember it. . . . It was as much psychological as physical. It seemed to go through the small of my back into my ideas, without involving my thoughts . . . I had conceived. (217)

This is an extraordinary passage. The increasing concentration on Anglo-Saxon manliness in the dominant discourse required an oppositional stance, and Forster provides one here with his own myth of origin. It draws on Greek mythology and, specifically, on the discussion of same-sex love in Plato's *Symposium.* Uranus, of course, was the mythical father of the Greek Titans and of Heavenly Aphrodite, who is regarded, in the *Symposium,* as the love that inspires homosexual relationships. Forster draws on these associations to create an alternative to heterosexual forms of conception, suggesting that *Maurice* was conceived when the Uranian, George Merrill, touched his backside. In alluding to a Greek myth of origin for his story of homosexual love and by appropriating the enormous authority of Platonic conceptions of masculine love, Forster is offering an alternative conception of masculinity at a period in which the epistemic institutions of state, church, and school were conspiring to define manhood in terms strictly amenable to increased imperial power and domestic control. When Clive professes his love, Maurice is "scandalized, horrified. He was shocked to the bottom of his suburban soul, and exclaimed, 'Oh, rot! . . . Durham, you're an Englishman. I'm another. Don't talk nonsense'" (56). The confusion, of course, is caused by Maurice's failure to appreciate the full meaning of the book given to him by Clive, Plato's *Symposium.* It is against the Anglo-Saxon conception of manhood—one specifically constructed in the service of an increasingly threatened political exercise in domestic and imperial control—that *Maurice* takes a stand.

I do not want to suggest here that all texts written by members of oppressed or suppressed identity groups are (or can only be) solely counterhegemonic, or that, even within the context of imperial literature, *Maurice* is first and foremost an antinationalist text that explicitly opposes the dominant formations of a national culture.[12] A reading of Forster's other work reveals that the homosexual impulse is frequently opposed to the dominant Anglo-Saxon force, and there is certainly a long history of homoerotic writing from which *Maurice* draws some of its grace.[13] However, I do wish to highlight the Platonic origin of the novel, a "conception" that tries to hide Maurice's desire to work hard and overcome his lack of punctuality, courtesy, and patriotism from both his homosexuality and his position as an imperial subject.

In light of the complex array of influences (both positive and negative, oppositional and complicit) working through the text, I want to draw attention to some of the discursive conditions that allow for *Maurice.* Crucially, these involve a repulsion toward the intolerant monster of the Anglo-Saxon racial myth and an attendant discovery of the roles of the church, state, and school in fostering the racial myth of superiority. Ann Stoler suggests that the nationalist discourses on sexuality of the late nineteenth century

> were predicated on exclusionary cultural principles that did more than divide the middle class from the poor. They marked out those whose claims to property rights, citizenship, and public relief were worthy of recognition and whose were not. (8)

Reimagining sexual desire in novels could therefore be seen to attack the dominant discourse at the moment that it set out to determine who was worth listening to and who wasn't. The dismantling of this myth of imperial worthiness by the construction of equally valid, parallel lifestyles is, I think, a key element in other writers of early modernism. Lawrence's *Women in Love*, for instance, deliberately appropriates deviant sexualities in the construction of an alternative form of society. *Howards End*, too, tries to conceive of England as "radically split—between Wilcox capitalist imperialism and Schlegel humanitarianism" (Wright 23), thereby attempting to offset the assumed dominance of Anglo-Saxon imperialism with the almost sleight-of-hand introduction of a competing discourse. The "unspeakable" love of Maurice—and the "unspeakable" sexuality of many Lawrentian encounters—takes its place beside the horrors and the ou-boums of the boundary texts, *Heart of Darkness* and *A Passage to India.*

In considering how sexual relations are implicated in the transition from colonial tensions to modernist aesthetics, it is worth recalling that Forster's trip to India in 1912 was not solely in pursuit of material for a forthcoming "Indian" novel. Syed Ross Masood, to whom Forster had made several declarations of love in 1910 and 1911, had returned to India, and Forster longed to see him again. There was, thus, a certain sexual charge to Forster's trip, an aspect that is interestingly absent from

Forster's account at the beginning of *Maurice* with its emphasis on the wholly European genesis of the novel. We should remember too that Carpenter—the father of *Maurice*—was a devoted student of Hinduism.[14] The necessity of this potential misrecognition, in which colonial tensions are displaced onto well-educated, Europeanized versions of alternative identities, has not yet been fully explored. What systems of signification determine that *Maurice* can only be conceived by a European writer under the watchful caresses of his two European parents? Or, more bluntly, what forces ensured that an unpublishable novel of hidden, homosexual love would be written after an extended tour of India?

If *Maurice* participates in opposing the dominant myth of British racial superiority, it does so in terms of a discourse of which the empire was an offshoot. To counter the Anglo-Saxon of imperial discourse, texts like *Maurice*—by necessity, situated within the confines of comfortable, knowable, upper-middle-class English life where the rule of law was accepted and generally upheld—draw their strength and plausibility from the convincing atmosphere of the known. A large part of this familiarity does, of course, stem from that tradition of bourgeois individualism whose aesthetic form, as Stephen Greenblatt has argued, is the realist novel. His comments on the world of this realist novel apply, it seems to me, equally well to the world of Forster: it "relies on a massive police apparatus, a strong middle-class nuclear family, an elaborate school system" (64).

Into this general atmosphere of the known (the secure police state of the morally guarded Home Counties), it was possible to introduce variables: homosexuality, class-crossing affairs, Germans, Italians. This was, with the notable exceptions of *Heart of Darkness* and *A Passage to India*, the sole terrain on which readers and writers were able to conceive of equally valid lives and relationships between valuable individuals. *Maurice* is made possible by the tensions inherent in the imperial discourse of colonial and class control, but these tensions must be all but eliminated before a narrative can emerge. Maurice, the struggling homosexual trapped in homophobic England, owes his livelihood to countless colonial and working-class subjects who were too unrecognizable, too foreign, to exist in the world of peace, police, and realist prose narratives. Yet to situate Maurice, Leonard Bast, Lilia, the Schlegel sisters, and the Wilcoxes in the truly foreign, colonial arena was, as *A Passage to India* finally reveals, not a coherent possibility.[15] Social intercourse between individuals from different civilizations would have required the too obvious pretense of an equality of civilizational discourses—all too obvious because the very presence of the ruling class was justified by the discourse of guardianship. In other words, the assumption of English superiority in imperial discourse provided the material for an exaggerated Anglo-Saxon myth and narrowly defined the arena within which competing conceptions of the Anglo-Saxon could be presented.

Howards End is, perhaps, the most telling example of this domestication of imperial tensions among Forster's novels, setting itself the task, according to Anne Wright, of "defining and rejecting what is wrong with England, and establishing a positive configuration" (23)—a task that it hopes to accomplish without lifting its gaze from the Home Counties! Indeed, *Howards End* can only envisage disruption occurring from the lower middle classes, embodied, in the novel, in the figure of Leonard Bast. Figures further removed from the Anglo-Saxon norm are incomprehensible to the narrator: "we are not concerned with the very poor. They are unthinkable, and only to be approached by the statistician or the poet"(35).[16] Modernist texts, opposing the ever-narrowing definition of valuable human existence with narrative evasions, complications, and contradictory assertions, were nonetheless forced to maintain as a given the authenticity of individual experience. In order to oppose the imperial vision of a rigidly defined Anglo-Saxon identity, Maurice has to be a man with most of the qualities of this kind of Englishman, sharing his preoccupation with work, altruism, and responsibility. His task in the course of the novel is to learn that lifestyles slightly beyond these narrowly defined boundaries can have value.

This belief in the integrity of the individual is a motif in much of Forster's fictional work: the Schlegel sisters in *Howards End* come to appreciate that other modes of life—Leonard Bast and the Wilcoxes[17]—are also valid; the Herritons in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* come, stubbornly, to an understanding of the worth of Lilia, Gino, and Miss Abbott; and, although the narrator of *Howards End* is incapable of conceiving life forms beyond the lower middle classes, Ernst Schlegel speaks directly to the integrity of each human life in his diatribe against imperial expansion, in a speech that jabs fiercely at the poets and scholars who glorified empire:

> It is the vice of a vulgar mind to be thrilled by bigness, to think that a thousand square miles are a thousand times more wonder-

> ful than one square mile, and that a million square miles are almost the same as heaven. That is not imagination. No, it kills it. When their poets over here try to celebrate bigness they are dead at once, and naturally. . . . Oh yes, you have learned men, who collect more facts than do the learned men of England. They collect facts, and facts, and empires of facts. But which of them will rekindle the light within? (23–24)

In fact, Maurice's "great" achievement throughout the course of the novel is to achieve this realization about the existential value of others, the right of every human to be treated fairly and equally. This is not a shallow victory: as a product of the public school system, Maurice has been taught to measure out his feelings like a bag of potatoes to ensure that he is never bankrupted. His early years are spent in training for an imperial post where he will need to act quickly and feel slowly. But the novel traces the gradual development of Maurice's "heart," noting several points at which Maurice decides that other people have vital existences too. The first occurs at university, where Maurice senses a little freedom after the muddling claustrophobia of school: "once inside college his discoveries multiplied. People turned out to be alive . . . they too had insides" (32). Later in the novel, after considerable emotional upheavals, the narrator comments of Maurice that "his troubles had taught him that other people are alive, but not yet that they are different" (140). By the end, with Alec, the lowly working-class boy, he will be able to assert the right of two consenting adults to form whatever union they see fit. In the context of the period, this is an achievement. It is, however, as the epigraph to this essay ought to alert us, a victory paid for in canonical currency: unspeakable sexual identity makes possible the destruction of history and tradition, class and race, money and responsibilities.

Notes

1. This is not to argue that these texts participate actively in the construction of a controlling imperial discourse, though Chinua Achebe, for instance, has famously denounced the role of *Heart of Darkness* in determining and perpetuating Western attitudes about "Africa" by relegating the entire African continent and population to a mere background against which the West plays out its own concerns. In his strongly worded condemnation, Achebe writes, "Joseph Conrad was a thoroughgoing racist. . . . Can nobody see the preposterous and per-

verse arrogance in thus reducing Africa to the role of props for the break-up of one petty European mind?" (11). Nor is it to suggest that they enthusiastically celebrate the successes of empire. These roles, it seems to me, are more properly attributed to works by the likes of Robert Louis Stevenson, H. Rider Haggard, and, a little more problematically, Rudyard Kipling.

2. It is, of course, true that the mysterious Marabar Caves are also an effect of the Orientalist discourse so well analyzed by Edward Said, which requires that the East has to be ultimately "mysterious." I certainly do not want to refute the accuracy of this assertion here but would emphasize instead that other discursive impulses are also revealed in the representation of the Marabar Caves. Specifically, I would like to chart the impulse in Forster's text toward a total inability—that might also be a refusal—to create a wholly new language.

3. Figures are taken from *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vols. 3 and 4.

4. See, for example, John Cell.

5. Several commissions throughout the 1860s focused on the respective roles of public, grammar, and working-class schools, arguing that reform was required to optimize the output each class could deliver. The Education Act of 1870 that created school boards across the country would lead, by 1899, to free elementary education for all and, in 1902, to free secondary education. Subsequent acts in the 1870s required ever greater numbers of students to attend school until, by 1880, practically every child in Britain was attending school until the age of 11.

6. The extent of this rhetoric becomes especially marked in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. The upper-middle-class society of Sawston comes to the "realization" that Gino and Lilia's son must be raised in England. The baby, in a remarkable parallel to the controversy that surrounded the young Cuban boy Elian Gonzalez, becomes a pawn within this discourse of Anglo-Saxon norms. His English relatives try to steal off with him to England, in the hope that "it" would then become "Low Church . . . high principled .. tactful, gentlemanly, artistic" (113).

7. John Mackenzie notes the extent to which this curriculum was couched in terms of unchallengeable patriotism: "There are few, if any, dissident voices within school geography and history texts, for to take a contrary line would inevitably have been seen as unpatriotic"(221).

8. Forster, it would appear, certainly felt himself to be living in a period of crisis. Comparing his age with that of Matthew Arnold's, he wrote, "the collapse of all civilization, so realistic for us, sounded in his ears like a distant and

harmonious cataract, plunging from Alpine snows into the eternal bosom of the Lake of Geneva" (*Abinger Harvest* 69).

9. And, as Furbank notes in his biography, Forster's attitude toward India conformed to this Liberal position:

> Forster and Dickinson, and Liberals like them, at this period, scarcely envisaged independence for India . . . [they] came to India in a mood of optimism, still believing in the power of disinterested social criticism. (220)

10. Of course, the Anglo-Saxon myth has a long history in British literature. Some of this is neatly captured in Albert Thibaudet's 1919 comment that *Robinson Crusoe* was a book written "for a race, not for a public" (Green 78).

11. As J. M. Coetzee notes in his study of South African writing, European colonization required constant effort on the part of the white colonist. Sloth could not be tolerated, for

> the degeneration of the white colonist in Africa was no peripheral matter to his masters in Europe, in that it threatened one of the arguments by which expansive imperialism justified itself: that those deserve to inherit the earth who make best use of it. (3)

12. Though it is interesting in the light of the counterhegemonic force of *Maurice* and its appropriation of earlier Greek myths to note that a similar complex of concerns—individuality, nationhood, honor, duty, and disgrace—is visible in Plato's *Symposium*. As Foucault notes in the second volume of *The History of Sexuality*,

> Phaedrus recalls the principle that should be one's guide in the love of young men as well as life in general: "shame at what is disgraceful and ambition for what is noble; without these feelings neither a state nor an individual can accomplish anything great or fine." (205)

A formulation like this would certainly have won the approval of Lord Meath.

13. For a fuller discussion of this, see Boone.

14. For a fuller discussion of Carpenter's Indian influences, see Gregory Bredbeck. According to Bredbeck, Carpenter had traveled widely in India and Sri Lanka and was an avid student of the sacred Sanskrit texts.

15. In fact, as Bette London has recognized, Adela's attempted intimacy with the other produces a breakdown that is the inevitable consequence of contagion by the unfamiliar, foreign, uncontrollable voice. It is, writes London, "a case of cultural transgression with its attendant disease" (186).

16. It is of course possible to read this, as Stuart Sillars has done, as an ironic admission of the bourgeois novel's structural and ideological inability to deal with the lives of "others." But whether it is self-deprecating, self-conscious irony or sheer ignorance, the narrator cannot move his gaze beyond the Home Counties, and this inability is the result of the limits proscribed by the imperial discourse of the period.

17. The realization is slightly ironic in the context of the novel's humanitarian discourse, since the Wilcoxes are the ones who have "fostered such virtues as neatness, decision, and obedience, virtues of the second rank no doubt, but they have formed our civilization" (77).

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Across the Widest Gulf: Nonhuman Subjectivity in Virginia Woolf's *Flush*

Craig Smith

In 1933 Virginia Woolf published *Flush: A Biography,* an experiment in genre that purports to tell the life story of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's canine companion. It was Woolf's most popular book during her lifetime, but it has subsequently become her most neglected. Scholarly opinion has generally dismissed *Flush* as a trivial potboiler, unworthy of its author's position as a major modernist innovator. The present essay will attempt to reassess that judgment by viewing the text in relation to recent developments in the study of animal behavior and nonhuman subjectivity, by assessing the reasons for critical hostility toward the book, and by analyzing Woolf's own conflicted views on her project.

As a dog story, *Flush* belongs to a subgenre of the literary animal story. The first successful English novel with an animal protagonist is Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* (1877). Sewell deploys the conventions of Victorian first-person narrative in writing an equine "autobiography." Her protagonist's experiences could only have befallen a horse, but his voice and emotions are recognizably human. This divided, anthropomorphic narrative subjectivity facilitates the author's project of inspiring sympathy for the plight of abused horses. In the early twentieth century, the many animal stories of Colette display a similar moral purpose. Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and *White Fang* (1906) exercise a more "masculine" emotional detachment, developing Nietzschean allegories of heroic atavism. London's superdogs shed the "feminizing" influence of civilization, returning to an unspoiled feral state.

Among Woolf's high modernist contemporaries, Mikhail Bulgakov puts a canine character to satiric service in *Heart of a Dog* (1925). Bulgakov takes the pretext of the fantastic dog story as a vehicle for commentary on distinctly human political issues. This becomes the favored form for dog stories by postmodernists such as Harlan Ellison. *Flush,* in contrast to other classics of the animal story genre, is neither specifically humane nor specifically humanistic in its agenda. Rather, it represents Woolf's attempt to exercise modernist literary techniques in the mapping of a canine subjectivity, as an experiment worth performing for its own sake.

Woolf's book has numerous direct or indirect successors. Eric Knight's widely imitated adventure story *Lassie Come-Home,* appearing seven years after *Flush,* tries to evoke the particularities of canine experience for a specifically young adult audience. The dog memoir has formed a distinct branch within the canine subgenre of the literary animal story. Later writers as various as John Steinbeck (*Travels with Charlie*), Jacqueline Susann (*Every Night, Josephine!*), and Paul Auster (*Timbuktu*) have described their own canine relationships. But perhaps only *My Dog Tulip,* by Woolf's Bloomsbury acquaintance J. R. Ackerley, matches *Flush* in seriousness of methodology and elegance of execution.

A fresh critical response to *Flush* must first take account of the explicit nature of Woolf's project: to write the biography of a dog. To date, attempts to explicate this text have approached it as a feminist allegory of the subjugation of women in Victorian England.[1] This has had the unfortunate effect of implying that *Flush* may be accepted as a serious object of study only to the extent that it may be represented as being not really about a dog. The anthropocentric bias that underlies these readings has its discursive foundation in the Enlightenment.

Descartes formulated modern anthropocentrism in his distinction between humans, who by virtue of reason are aware of their experience, and nonhuman animals, which he claims are effectively machines lacking in significant self-awareness. Descartes's followers took this view to its logical conclusion, insisting that nonhuman animals are incapable of even such basic experiences as physical pleasure or pain. That position became the standard justification for vivisection and other abusive practices. As the zoologist James Serpell points out in his deconstruction of this discourse, Descartes's theory provided a rationalization for practices previously justified on theological grounds:

> The early Christian (and Aristotelian) view that animals were created purely for the benefit of mankind, and the Cartesian idea that they were incapable of suffering, were mutually compatible variations on the same theme. Both provided human beings with a license to kill; a permit to use or abuse other life-forms with total impunity. (170)

Charles Darwin, in one of his most extraordinary interventions against the established order, challenged the Cartesian divide by pointedly studying human and animal consciousness as points in a continuum of experience (Masson 162–63). But Darwin's attempt to counter the claims of anthropocentrism in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872) met with even greater resistance than his theory of natural selection. Resistance to the investigation of animal emotion and consciousness, as opposed to mechanistic animal behavior, persists in science to this day; most of the modern investigation of animal consciousness has occurred in the relatively marginalized and underfinanced work of wildlife field observers.

There is an obvious economic imperative to maintain the Cartesian divide. Serpell describes the ethical bind that arises from the arbitrary distinction between animals raised to be slaughtered and tormented, by commerce and by science, and animals raised to be pampered and valued in themselves as pets (3–20). The intimate awareness of nonhuman emotion that we experience in living with dogs or cats throws into question our exploitation of other species (and less fortunate members of these same species) that have demonstrably comparable levels of intelligence. Rather than acknowledge the ethical bind involved in our treatment of agricultural, sport, and laboratory animals, we in our culture save face by denigrating our own observation and experience with companion animals. We characterize pet keeping as a decadent manifestation of late capitalism and misspent postindustrial resources—a stereotype that falls apart if one takes account of the widespread and ardent practice of pet keeping among the native peoples of the Americas and the Pacific from prehistoric times to the present (Serpell 60–72).

Our continued reliance on the Cartesian divide in maintaining our scientific and commercial arrangements has even been discredited by its own methods. In the 1970s, a study at the Johns Hopkins Medical School found that dogs experienced measurably reduced levels of stress when gently caressed by lab workers while being subjected to intense electric shocks (Serpell 120–23). That is, the Johns Hopkins researchers objectively established the ethically insupportable nature of their own experiment: they proved that the dogs in question experienced emotional affect in the presence of human beings who were colluding in their torture. However, this study has proved no more influential than Darwin's. Instead, the scientific community has elected not to know what it knows, effectively returning the Cartesian divide to its origins in culturally mandated superstition. As the psychologist Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson notes, animal emotion "is regarded as too dangerous to be part of the scientific colloquy—such a minefield of subjectivity that no investigation of it should take place" (17).

This discourse has been crucial to the reception of *Flush,* in that the bad faith by which the Cartesian divide is maintained depends on the equation of anthropomorphism with sentimentality: to view nonhuman animal consciousness in human terms is, ipso facto, to sentimentalize it. This categorically precludes any view of animal consciousness whatever, since human terms are the only ones we possess. Literature, categorized as one of the "soft" disciplines, remains in a position subservient to the "hard" scientific disciplines of the modern university. *Flush* must be placed in the context of this discourse, which was already in place in Woolf's time. It was with good reason that she was sensitive to ridicule by critics who wrote from the position of "masculine" detachment, with its paranoid exclusion of "feminine" intuitive observation. Woolf was particularly fearful of being dismissed as "sentimental."

Ethologists—scientists devoted to observing animals in their native habitats—have found a critical form of anthropomorphism to be consistent with their projects, particularly in exploring the cognitive processes of nonhuman species. Donald Griffin, who first theorized the method that is now standard among ethologists, refutes the charge of sentimentality thus:

> [I]t is actually no more anthropomorphic, strictly speaking, to postulate mental experiences in another species than to compare its bony structure, nervous system, or antibodies with our own. . . . The charge carries weight only if one assumes in advance that animals do *not* have such experiences, and thus the accusation merely reiterates the original assumption. (124–25)

Elizabeth Marshall Thomas has observed that laboratory experiments concerned with animal behavior, far from providing reliable models of objective observation, are rendered essentially useless by their invasive and artificial nature (3). The intuitive, anecdotal methods developed by wildlife observers, deploying anthropomorphism within carefully maintained critical boundaries, remain the most reliable means of researching animal behavior as well as animal consciousness.

As described by Quentin Bell, Woolf's methods in writing *Flush* are related to those of modern ethologists in their guiding premises and in the sensibility they manifest. *Flush* is usually described, if it is described at all, as the story of Robert Browning's courtship of Elizabeth Barrett as seen through the eyes of Barrett's cocker spaniel. This is accurate as far as it goes, but defining *Flush* in these terms is not unlike defining the *Grasmere Journal* as a book about the poet William Wordsworth as seen through the eyes of his sister. Woolf follows the outline of the historical Flush's biography as reconstructed from the Browning letters and other scattered sources. She describes his first months at his suburban home with Mary Russell Mitford, his incarceration in the sick room of Elizabeth Barrett in Wimpole Street, his more traumatic incarceration among dognappers in the slum of Whitechapel, and his last years with the Brownings at Pisa and Florence. But Woolf does not simply provide a secondary account of the Brownings' travails and itinerary. As Bell observes, she attempts "to describe Wimpole Street, Whitechapel and Italy from a dog's point of view, to create a canine world of smells, fidelities and lusts" (409).

Bell does not locate the original of Woolf's Flush in a human personality but in Pinka, the golden cocker spaniel presented to Woolf by Vita Sackville-West (409). Indeed, a photograph of Pinka posing as Flush in a Victorian interior serves as the book's frontispiece (Hussey 89). Bell sees Woolf's primary source material as her observation of Pinka. Having spent her life among dogs, Woolf was not conventionally effusive in her behavior with them (Bell 409). She was thus well positioned to make respectful, informed, and unsentimental observations, and to deploy anthropomorphic comparisons and metaphors in a sophisticated way:

> She was fascinated by all animals but her affection was odd and remote. She wanted to know what her dog was feeling. . . . *Flush* is not so much a book by a dog lover as a book by someone

> who would love to be a dog. . . . Her dog was the embodiment of her own spirit, not the pet of an owner. (Bell 410)

This empathetic identification and curiosity, undistorted by any narcissistic greed for adulation, informs Woolf's text.

The narrative begins with a disquisition on the origins of English spaniels, emphasizing that a cocker spaniel's very existence as such depends on the vagaries of human exploitation. This is highly pertinent to the position of purebred dogs in Victorian England, where the definition and segregation of canine breeds was bound up in the attempts of the rising middle class to define itself by maintaining strict distinctions of identity (Thurston 97–120). Woolf pointedly observes that human lineages are not so indisputably, physically apparent as those of dogs (16).

Woolf tries to imagine what the sensual impressions of Flush's puppyhood would have been. Walking with Miss Mitford in the countryside, "a variety of smells interwoven in subtlest combination thrilled his nostrils"; amidst this olfactory abundance he is overcome by "a smell sharper, stronger, more lacerating than any—a smell that ripped across his brain stirring a thousand instincts, releasing a million memories—the smell of hare, the smell of fox" (20). At this point Woolf's poetic recreation of a puppy's consciousness leads her to the same insight that Elizabeth Marshall Thomas arrived at after thousands of hours of observation—that human companions are not the center of a dog's psyche. In the excitement of his specifically canine experience of smell, Flush "forgot his mistress; he forgot all humankind" (20).

Woolf does not entirely omit Flush's sexuality from her catalogue of his early experience, though she couches it in elaborate metaphor and euphemism: "Love blazed her torch in his eyes; he heard the hunting horn of Venus" (21). It is true that this approach lacks the frankness of the later dog biographer J. R. Ackerley, who describes the sexual experience of the Alsatian bitch Tulip more directly: "She panted, they panted. Some were so exhausted by their efforts that they vomited, bringing up breakfast or lunch" (158). Woolf's approach is consistent with her reticence in writing about human physicality. Yet, within the confines of Victorian rhetoric, her language does succeed in conveying something about an imperative canine desire.

In addition to the frontispiece photograph purporting to show the book's subject, the first edition is illustrated with line drawings by

Vanessa Bell emphasizing a canine perspective, along with contemporaneous portraits of Mrs. Browning and Miss Mitford (thus identified in the captions). When Miss Mitford presents Flush to her invalid friend Miss Barrett, his transfer of allegiance is presented with a less inhibited poetic empathy than his canine relationships. Suddenly aware that Miss Mitford has truly departed, leaving him in the strange surroundings of Wimpole Street, "the irrevocableness and implacability of fate so smote him, that he lifted up his head and howled aloud" (30). Accepting the condolences of Miss Barrett, Flush exchanges a "surprised" gaze with her:

> There was a likeness between them. As they gazed at each other each felt: Here am I—and then each felt: But how different! . . . Broken asunder, yet made in the same mould, could it be that each completed what was dormant in the other? (31)

Here Woolf brings into question both the Cartesian divide and the putative simplicity of human-canine relationships. The promise of a Platonic completion of lost halves cannot be realized in this scene, however. This is dramatized in the moment's conclusion:

> Between them lay the widest gulf that can separate one being from another. . . . Thus closely united, thus immensely divided, they gazed at each other.

Their standoff is resolved, or at least accommodated, by Flush's taking up his new position at Miss Barrett's feet, "where he was to lie forever after." Their long gaze results in a revelation not of identity but of relationship.

Flush's companionship, as Miss Mitford had hoped, draws Miss Barrett out of her deep depression. Woolf's delineation of the gradual but decisive effect that Flush has on Miss Barrett is strikingly similar to accounts of the use of pets in psychotherapeutic treatments of hospital patients, nursing home residents, and prison inmates.[2] The constant companionship of Flush and Miss Barrett is not without its conflicts and limitations: "Sometimes the tie would almost break; there were vast gaps in their understanding" (44). If Flush cannot comprehend Miss Barrett's motivation in spending "hour after hour passing her hand over a white page with a black stick," the poet is unable to comprehend the dog's "alternate rages of lust and greed" at the scent of a passing bitch or a distant mutton-bone (44). Woolf scrupulously establishes that these gaps in understanding are mutual.

Assuming his position as guardian companion with great intensity, Flush refuses to leave Miss Barrett in her back bedroom, even to take a walk. Woolf squeamishly refrains from explaining how the physical difficulties that would arise from this situation are surmounted. Ackerley devotes an entire chapter to Tulip's "liquids and solids." Woolf's complete censorship of the subject represses one of the most constant concerns in any human-animal relationship—and one that must surely have been a major difficulty in the stuffy, overfurnished back bedroom on Wimpole Street. Again, Woolf's cultural inhibitions in writing about the body limit her art.

Flush's jealousy of Robert Browning as he commences his courtship of Miss Barrett is dramatized not as an absurd comedy, but as a painful struggle toward understanding on Flush's part, not unlike Woolf's representations of human children confronted by adult relationships in such novels as *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. Robert Browning's indifference in this struggle infuriates Flush. It ends with Flush belatedly consenting to eat cakes that Browning has brought him as a peace offering—an historical incident, which Woolf presents with quotations taken from the Browning letters (*Flush* 80). The cakes have become putrid during Flush's long stubborn refusal to eat them; swallowing his pride along with the pastry as he acknowledges defeat in the struggle for dominance, Flush contradicts Wittgenstein's theory that dogs cannot feel humiliation. That theory remains controversial in recent studies of canine behavior (Masson 102).

Flush's relations with other dogs are less complicated than his human entanglements, being untroubled by individual attachment. Flush does not bond with another dog, as he would if he were allowed to roam free. Woolf attempts to understand how Flush would make sense of the varieties of dogs he encounters during his guided walks in Wimpole Street: "Flush knew before the summer had passed that there is no equality among dogs" (40). He is aware of himself as a member of the elite, signaled by the treatment he receives from human beings, as well as by the hierarchical behavior patterns of other dogs.

Woolf vividly represents an obscure corner of Victorian history—the phenomenon of dognapping for ransom. This practice was facilitated by the proximity of privileged areas such as Wimpole Street to degraded slums such as Whitechapel. The historical Flush was stolen three times; Woolf acknowledges in an endnote that she compresses these incidents into one (175). Going against her father's wishes in paying Flush's ransom, Miss Barrett personally delivers the sum to the dognappers' headquarters in Whitechapel to ensure that it will arrive before Flush is killed. By putting her own life in jeopardy to save the life of her dog—one whom she has sometimes treated indifferently, not least in the incident that led to his dognapping—Miss Barrett discovers the fortitude that will later enable her to elope with Browning and find integrity as a human being.

For Flush, the effects of the dognapping are precisely those that scientifically or commercially exploited animals suffer under abusive conditions. Kept in a state of tortuous neglect for five days in a filthy cellar, Flush begins to lose his mind: "The racket, the hunger and the thirst, the reeking smells of the place . . . were fast obliterating any clear image, any single desire" (96). As Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson argues, this is what Pavlov unintentionally demonstrated to be the result of such treatment in his experiments on dogs (183). Woolf gives Elizabeth Barrett's report of her reunion with Flush, following her intrepid efforts to free him: "He was not so enthusiastic about seeing me as I expected" (108). Delving into Flush's consciousness, Woolf supplies the reason for this unstereotypical behavior: "There was only one thing he wanted—clean water." The conventional human expectation of creatures who are created for our pleasure is unmasked here as a failure of human empathy.

In his last years, in Italy, Flush is allowed for the first time to live as a free-range dog. His relations with Mrs. Browning are "far less emotional now than in the old days," when they were cloistered together (125). Flush "embraces" other dogs, experiencing "what men can never know—love pure, love simple, love entire" (127). This freedom permits him to accept even the birth of the Brownings' son without being painfully afflicted with jealousy.

At the end of the narrative, in a passage that Woolf worried over and rewrote, Flush has a dream before he dies, recalling the incidents of his life. Woolf humbly describes his dream in the form of postulations. She suggests that a racial memory might emerge at the last: "Was he coursing up a hot hill-side with dark men shouting 'Span! Span!' as the rabbits darted from the brush?" (167). After happy memories of his puppyhood among the Mitfords, he is startled awake by a memory of intense terror among the dognappers of Whitechapel. (Again, Woolf phrases these descriptions as hypotheses only.) Flush jumps up, runs frantically, and dies. Notably absent from the dream are any memories of Flush's life with Elizabeth Barrett Browning, affirming that this book has not been simply a secondary biography of the poet. Must this scene be acknowledged as a sentimental conclusion? Dreams, of all psychological phenomena, imply not only a consciousness but a subconscious. Yet one point on which animal researchers agree is that dogs dream; only the content of their dreams remains unknowable (Masson 114–16). Woolf's imagining of Flush's dream, written from the assumption that canine dreams like human ones emerge from a mixture of memory, anxiety, and desire, is as valid as any.

Yet the charge of sentimentality continues to dog this text. Initial critical response to *Flush* ranged from David Garnett's praise in the *New Statesman* to an unsigned attack in *Granta,* which condemned the book for being at once facile and popular (Hussey 89). In a youthfully arrogant statement which he later regretted, Christopher Isherwood dismissed Virginia Woolf as a politically uncommitted intellectual likely to write "a novel about the hopeless love of a Pekingese dog for a very beautiful maidenhair fern" (113). This preemptive ridicule occurs in a letter to Stephen Spender of 14 November 1932—one month before Woolf completed *Flush*. Spender would have been aware of Woolf's current project, and no doubt shared his information with Isherwood. This reception, growing out of what was thought and said about Woolf and her subject rather than from an examination of the text itself, would prove characteristic of the book's critical history. Down the decades since, the negative reaction has remained dominant even as the work's popularity has faded. By 1972, Quentin Bell could characterize *Flush* as "one of the least read of her novels" (409). Woolf's other parodic biography, *Orlando*—a work whose critical history has moved in the opposite direction—receives 19 columns of text and illustration in Mark Hussey's encyclopedic reference guide, *Virginia Woolf A to Z; Flush* receives three. Suiting the word to the deed, Hussey notes that *"Flush* has not received very much critical attention" (89).

Most studies of Woolf do not mention *Flush*. With perhaps a dozen exceptions in the vast Woolf literature, those studies that do acknowledge the book's existence grant it only a paragraph, a sentence, a clause, or a descriptive adjective. These persistently recurring adjectives—"sentimental," "minor," "trivial"—are disturbingly redolent of the terms by which women's writings were once dismissed as suitable subjects for critical study, and by which women's lives were dismissed as suitable subjects for biography.

Leonard Woolf reported that *Flush* was "a great success" in material terms: "The Hogarth Press sold 18,739 copies in the first six months and Harcourt, Brace 14,081 in America, where it was an alternative selection of The Book-of-the-Month Club" (144). But he went on to insist that the author "never took [the book] seriously," and became the first of many critics who would quote Virginia Woolf's own diary entry of 23 December 1932 as evidence against the artistic merit of the book she had just completed. In this entry Woolf expresses her fear that *Flush* was "too slight and too serious" (L. Woolf 151–52; V. Woolf *Diary* 134).

In her letters and diaries, Woolf habitually expressed self-doubt about her writing—from her book reviews to her novels. She typically expressed impatience and dissatisfaction with her current project and eagerness to move on to her next one. It is dangerous to rely on these passages to confirm one's own assessment of a given text. Hermione Lee quotes Woolf's letter to John Lehmann of 31 July 1932—after the death of Lytton Strachey—in order to establish that the author dismissed her own book as a joke: "She went on with *Flush*. But it did not seem so much fun now, 'as I meant it for a joke with Lytton, and a skit on him'" (82). Lee omits Woolf's qualifying phrase about the potential of her ongoing project: "But I'll see" (*Letters* 83). It is true that Woolf also dismissed the book as "a joke on Lytton" in her letter to Ottoline Morrell of 23 February 1933 (*Letters* 161–62). Writing less defensively to correspondents whom she did not suspect of being hostile, however, Woolf took a different tone.

Thanking David Garnett on 8 October 1933 for his positive review of *Flush,* Woolf amends her earlier statements, specifying that the "joke with Lytton" referred only to "the last paragraph as originally written"—a parody of Strachey's imaginative recreation of the death of Queen Victoria, which Woolf cut before publication (*Letters* 231–32). Far from originating with Lee, the practice of selective quotation from the diaries and letters has become traditional in justifying the exclusion of *Flush* from the canon. Yet a similar justification could as easily be invoked to dismiss any book in Woolf's oeuvre.

Against Woolf's deprecatory private references to *Flush* must be set her unguarded response to a reader who grasped her serious intentions in writing the book. Replying to Sibyl Colefax on 22 October 1933, Woolf gives little indication that she considered this work to be a joke:

> I'm so glad you liked *Flush*. I think it shows great discrimination in you because it was all a matter of hints and shades, and practically no one has seen what I was after, and I was elated to heaven to think that you among the faithful firmly stood—or whatever Milton said. (*Letters* 236)

It is true that a good joke may be exhilarating, and it is gratifying when others catch the point of our jokes, especially when they are made professionally. But Woolf's exultant language in expressing her joy at being understood suggests a more serious artistic purpose in *Flush*—one that, her language in this letter implies, perhaps eluded Leonard Woolf, John Lehmann, and Ottoline Morrell. Her resort to Milton cannot but suggest a lofty design, even as her casual misquotation prevents the reference from becoming pompous. Woolf appears to conclude here that, in the response of a sensitive reader such as Lady Colefax, *Flush* is not "too serious" for its subject after all; nor, in its "hints and shades," is it too slight.

Almost universally excluded from the canon of Woolf's major works, *Flush* has not been critically evaluated as what it declares itself to be: the biography of a dog. Such scant academic attention as it has received attempts to redefine it as allegorized autobiography, an approach that only confirms the book's position as a marginal commentary on, recuperation from, or preparation for Woolf's "serious" fiction. About even these reclamations there persists a faint odor of professional embarrassment regarding Woolf's project. It is as if, in writing about a dog, Woolf were doing something not merely atypical but unworthy of a great writer—one, moreover, whose reputation bears the burden of proving that it is possible for a woman to be a great writer within the configuration of high modernism. Yet a sympathetic reading of *Flush,* taken on its own terms—as an intuitive, clear-eyed attempt to represent a nonhuman subject—reveals it to be one of Woolf's most original and forward-looking achievements.

In a note in *Flush* on Carlyle's dog Nero, Woolf called for a "treatise on canine psychology," one that might establish "whether it is possible to call one dog Elizabethan, another Augustan, another Victorian" (184). While denying that she had the space to undertake such a project, Woolf actually succeeded in making a substantial gesture toward crossing the gulf of understanding between human and nonhuman subjects, and toward understanding the relationship between the two.

Notes

1. For readings of *Flush* as anthropocentric feminist allegory, see DeSalvo, Eberly, Squier, and Vanita.

2. As an instance of Woolf's prescience, it is worth noting that this did not become a formal medical practice until 1964. See Serpell 89–107.

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Virginia Woolf in the Pay of Booksellers: Commerce, Privacy, Professionalism, *Orlando*

Patrick Collier

Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928) stages one of the central conflicts of modernism. It puts into play the opposing impulses of the longing for cultural centrality—"as large and miscellaneous an audience as possible" (Eliot, *Prose* 94)[1]—and the desire to write a radical language that stretches or subverts the boundaries of signification and whose inaccessibility to most readers can be claimed as a mark of its authenticity. *Orlando* raises the tension between the urge to decry the institutions of the literary marketplace and the need to master and manipulate those institutions, for prestige and cultural capital if not for popularity per se—between the writer's wish to be heard and her desire to remain true to her artistic ambition, expressed in *Orlando* as the wish to refine language into an instrument so efficient, capable of conveying such a dense load of meaning, that it can be understood only by the writer herself and a few select others. This tension is complicated by the contours of the literary marketplace, in which the press and the publishing industry mediate between reader and writer, threatening both the writer's freedom to hew to her own aims *and* her ability to reach her audience (should she decide that doing so is worthwhile).

In her fiction and journalism of the mid to late twenties, Woolf repeatedly dramatized this conflict with reference to three distinct but related sets of oppositions: art vs. commerce, private vs. public writing, and amateurism vs. professionalism.[2] Woolf in this period reconfigured these categories against a modernist grain—articulated by T. S. Eliot and Ezra

Pound in the late 1910s and early 1920s—that attempted to validate literature by associating it with professionalism, thereby freeing it from the taints of commercialism and an amateurism that they consistently gendered feminine (McDonald 78–79). *Orlando* stages an inquiry into these categories by having its time-traveling main character, a perpetually aspiring writer, attempt to navigate the institutions of a series of historical literary marketplaces as a sort of Gulliver who repeatedly has to learn anew each culture's valuation of art, commerce, professionalism, and amateurism, all the while wavering personally between the desire for privacy and the desire for publicity. As Orlando traipses through time, from the sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries, he or she vacillates from the extremes of wishing to write only for a lover, using the radically refined patois Woolf would describe in *The Waves* as "some little language such as lovers use" (238) to powerfully desiring to be read, to be sold, to be popular.[3] Orlando's travels involve each era's literary world, from the Renaissance patronage system to the eighteenth-century salon-*Spectator* scene to the late nineteenth-century development of mass publishing. Each of these settings calls attention to its particular configuration of the author-reader relationship and its relative mediacy or immediacy. In every case, though, *Orlando*'s constructions of the relationship between writer and audience is marked by anxieties we can recognize in Virginia Woolf.

All novelists of early twentieth-century England had to contend with a saturated book market and an industry of literary middlemen (and women) who stood between them and their desired audience.[4] Many writers were concerned, as well, with the professionalization issue—with literature's establishment as an academic subject, the emergence of a professional class of critics, and the aura of seriousness and relevance that literature might attain through these processes. Woolf's unique intervention in these discussions, in *Orlando* and in her journalism of the mid-twenties, was to collapse the two issues, positing professionalism as *itself* a market force that threatened to raise obstructions between writers and readers—a claim that undermined the professional's purportedly special status as outside or above the economy of commodities. That is to say, Woolf reconfigures the standard binaries, aligning professionalism with publicity and commercialism—all of which raise obstacles or exact compromises threatening to a fruitful writer-audience relationship. Woolf was willing to engage with the multiply mediated literary public sphere of the mid to late twenties. (Indeed, the period marks her emergence as a successful author.) But she also used her fiction and nonfiction of the period to probe its difficulties and costs. One way she critiqued the literary public sphere was by constructing imagined exchanges between readers and writers that were more private, more intimate, thus holding out an ideal that, while unattainable under market conditions, and perhaps incompatible with publishing, represented a better balance of power between readers and writers than anything she saw as currently possible. Woolf's writing of the late twenties suggests that professionalism and patronage—two characteristic modernist ways of holding (or seeming to hold) the marketplace at bay—neither guaranteed the writer's integrity nor came without costs to the reader-writer relationship.

Privacy and patronage

Vestiges and re-eruptions of patronage have long been an acknowledged force in the history of modernism, from Lady Rothermere's bankrolling of T. S. Eliot's *Criterion* to the financial and in-kind support offered James Joyce by Grant Richards, Sylvia Beach, Dora Marsden, and many others. Patronage promises freedom from commercial and material imperatives, allowing the writer to follow his or her "vision" without paying heed to "extraneous" matters. As Lawrence Rainey suggests, modernism's particular forms of patronage constituted "an institutional sphere that was momentarily immune to the pressures of a market economy, partially removed from the constraints of an expansive and expanding mass culture" (40). While Woolf never needed or sought patronage, her varying figurations of the concept were central to her life-long and inconclusive agon over the question of audience.[5] Like many of her contemporaries, Woolf sometimes imagined a productive simplicity in the precapitalist patronage system—a means for providing the "material things" on which, she argued, "intellectual freedom depends" (*Room* 108.) In numerous essays, though, Woolf wondered whether patronage might, rather than liberating the creating intellect, place demands upon it, deforming the artist's aims even as it frees the artist to strive for them. Woolf's satire of patronage in *Orlando* figures the exchange not as simple, no-strings-attached beneficence but as an unpredictable power relationship, one with potential benefits and potential perils for both benefactor and recipient.

As Wilson has noted (178), Nick Greene is the focus of much of

Orlando's inquiry into privacy, publicity, and professionalism, and he first appears as a purportedly idealistic writer in search of patronage. Smitten with the desire to publish, the Elizabethan Orlando summons Greene to his country estate to pump him for information about the literary world. Greene denounces the artistic bankruptcy of the London literary scene, in which the publishing market—and the desire of young writers to cater to it—are the main villains:

> No, he concluded, the great age of literature is past; the great age of literature was the Greek; the Elizabethan was inferior in every respect to the Greek. In such ages men cherished a divine ambition which he might call La Gloire (he pronounced it Glawr, so that Orlando did not at first catch his meaning). Now all young writers were in the pay of the booksellers and poured out any trash that would sell. (88–89)

Greene calls up familiar binary oppositions, paralleling the art/commerce and sacred/profane distinctions through his contrast between the "divine ambition" of the nostalgically imagined Greeks and the crass commercialism of the young writers "in the pay of the booksellers." (As Joyce Wexler and others have pointed out, the art/commerce distinction is in fact a nineteenth-century creation; Greene's invocation of it is an anachronism, much more characteristic of 1920s than Elizabethan England.) In Greene's formulation, those who write for "Glawr" apparently eschew commercial and material considerations—the considerations that pervert the aims of "all young writers" of Greene's own era. The irony at Greene's expense does not end with his pronunciation: this espouser of high, abstract, and ethereal aims for literature is himself pronouncedly corporeal: his furor over the state of literature does not detract from his enjoyment of Orlando's food and wine, and indeed "the more he denounced his own time, the more complacent he became" (89). Nor is Greene, for all his talk of "Glawr," without a material agenda:

> "Glawr," said Greene, "is the spur of noble minds. Had I a pension of three hundred pounds a year paid quarterly, I would live for Glawr alone. I would lie in bed every morning reading Cicero. I would imitate his style so that you couldn't tell the difference between us. . . . That's what I call Glawr. But it's necessary to have a pension to do it." (90)

Thus Orlando becomes a patron, and thus Greene simultaneously meets and masks his material aims (the particular accomplishment of patronage); he posits money as a necessary and lamentable precondition to "Glawr" rather than an aim in itself. Greene leaves Orlando's estate with a guaranteed pension and promptly writes a poem that satirizes and scandalizes his patron, so Orlando is doubly duped. Woolf's satire emphasizes the material motives that lie behind Greene's purportedly idealistic attack on commercialism: his criticism actually serves as a rhetorical strategy for securing money.

It would be easy to dismiss Greene entirely as a figure of fun, were his appeal for "a pension of three hundred pounds a year paid quarterly" to permit him to write "for Glawr alone" not strikingly similar to Woolf's claim, published a year later in *A Room of One's Own,* that a woman must have 500 pounds a year and a room of her own to write fiction. The similarity between Woolf's position and that of the satirized Greene highlights both Woolf's basic belief that "Intellectual freedom depends upon material things" (*Room* 108) and the irresolvable class complications her solution entails. For how is one to achieve intellectual freedom without taking on the taint of the marketplace, unless, like Woolf, one has a guaranteed income—in her case a 500-pound annuity from an aunt who "died by a fall from her horse" (*Room* 37)? Indeed, Woolf explicitly contrasts the intellectual detachment, the "freedom to think of things in themselves" (39) that she attributes to her financial independence with the pinched intellectual condition she experienced when she made her living "by cadging odd jobs from newspapers" (37). Worse than the difficulty of the work or the poor pay, she writes, was

> the poison of fear and bitterness which those days bred in me. To begin with, always to be doing work that one did not wish to do, and to do it like a slave, flattering and fawning, not always necessarily perhaps, but it seemed necessary and the stakes were too great to run risks; and then the thought of that one gift which it was death to hide—a small one but dear to the possessor—perishing and with it myself, my soul—all this became like a rust eating away the bloom of the spring, destroying the tree at its heart. However, as I say, my aunt died; and whenever I change a ten-shilling note a little of that rust and corrosion is rubbed off; fear and bitterness go. (37–38)

The guaranteed income, Woolf argues, eliminates the need for patronage or jobbing as a journalist (which, as we shall see, Woolf defined as a kind of literary professionalism—one that she continued to practice and about which she was deeply conflicted). It shields her from the intellectual compromises monetary need imposes on the writer, from the necessity of fawning before editors or potential patrons, from becoming a duplicitous Nick Greene or a harried Grub Street hack. The intellectual benefit is philosophical detachment, an opportunity to "see things for what they are," free of "fear and bitterness" (*Room* 39)—an opportunity that the struggling journalist does not have. Later, when Woolf celebrates the emergence of women in the public sphere, she acknowledges that, despite women's freedom to earn their own money, their "chance of earning five hundred pounds a year" remains "precarious" (108). The unsettling, and unstated, implication is that most women, though freed from "the drawing room" (108), will lack the felt freedom from the marketplace that Woolf sees as necessary to intellectual integrity. A diary entry written after Woolf gave the talks that became *A Room of One's Own* makes it clear that she did not imagine that sort of financial and intellectual freedom for her listeners, college women at Newnham and Girton colleges: "Starved but valiant young women—that's my impression. Intelligent eager, poor; & destined to become schoolmistresses in Shoals" (*Diary* 3: 200). Freed from the need to sell her work to pay for basic necessities, Woolf could use her literary earnings (which hit a new peak in 1927, as she was working on *Orlando*) to furnish herself with luxuries such as cars, properties, attractive clothing, and holidays. Her voluntary, rather than compulsory, engagement with the literary marketplace saves her from the pressures that threaten her intellectual detachment. But Woolf's legacy from her aunt differs from literary patronage in that her dead aunt can exact no conceivable intellectual compromise.[6]

Intellectual integrity, of course, never becomes an issue with Nick Greene, who is consistently portrayed as subliterary and money-driven. *Orlando*'s particular take on patronage has a laughable but disturbingly canny and self-involved writer successfully ensnaring a patron. Three years earlier, Woolf had published an essay that used patronage as a metaphor to comment on the multiply mediated literary marketplace of the early twentieth century, with its attendant threats to the writer-reader relationship. The essay, "The Patron and the Crocus," seeks insight on the question of whom one should write for given the current, fragmented nature of the readership. Artists in previous centuries, Woolf suggests, could rely on a stable relation between artist and audience: Renaissance poets wrote for the aristocracy, eighteenth-century writers for "coffee-house wit[s] and Grub Street bookseller[s]," Victorians for "the half-crown magazines and the leisured classes" (212). But the modern writer can follow no such "enviably simple" route to the audience; she can only look back with envy at "the splendid results of these different alliances" (212). In a move typical of Woolf's essays in the twenties, the writer-reader relationship is figured as an alliance (Dubino 133), but the conditions of the literary market threaten to disrupt it; the press is simultaneously a means of access and a barrier to the artist, who faces an array of confusing choices when considering audience:

> There is the daily Press, the weekly Press, the monthly Press; the English public and the American public; the best-seller public and the worst-seller public; the highbrow public and the red-blood public; all now organised self-conscious entities capable through their various mouthpieces of making their needs known and their approval or displeasure felt. Thus the writer who has been moved by the sight of the first crocus in Kensington Gardens has, before he sets pen to paper, to choose from a crowd of competitors the particular patron who suits him best. (213)

While Dubino reads "the patron" as "the reader" here (133), Woolf's point is precisely that no simple access to a clearly defined reader is possible. The modern "patron" is a confusing compound of the reader, the particular medium through which the reader is reached (the daily, weekly, or monthly press), his or her social location (class and nationality—"the British public and the American public"), and the literary journalist middlemen ("mouthpieces") who in some way represent the reader. The relationship between reader and artist, once marked by direct contact between aristocratic patron and poet, is now multiply mediated.[7] Writers can only "know" their audiences through the mediation of their "mouthpieces," who presumably (Woolf seems dubious as to how reliably) express their aesthetic preferences. (Interestingly, Woolf sees literary journalists here as speaking *for* the audience rather than *to* it—a clever acknowledgment that authors read reviews with greater attention and trepidation than the paper-buying public does.) While the essay acknowledges that the "patron" was always a compound, that is, "half-crown magazines and . . . leisured classes," the levels of mediation have multiplied as readership has spread throughout society, producing "high-brow and . . . red-blood" publics and new conduits of communication between artists and these audiences.

"The Patron and the Crocus" suggests that this multiplicity of "patrons" exerts its potentially harmful pressure at the most crucial moment—the moment of composition. Woolf expects the writer to choose his patron "before he sets pen to paper"—a position consistent with the importance she ascribes to the audience in "The Common Reader," the introduction to the volume in which "The Patron and the Crocus" appeared. That volume, *The Common Reader,* rehearses various positions on the reader-writer relationship, and the introduction welcomes "the pressure of an audience" as a potentially wholesome influence, provided that the audience consciously joins with the writer in the interest of creating a greater literature.[8] But "The Patron and the Crocus," despite its nod to the audience, also powerfully expresses Woolf's concern that the apparatuses of press and publishing that stand between the writer and the audience threaten to adulterate or pervert this wholesome pressure.

The sense in the essay that the patron has been a constant, but constantly changing, presence assumes both the importance of material support for writing and the necessity of public engagement, of an audience of some kind. The difficulty here lies not, in other words, in the presence of the patron but rather in the way the multiplicity of potential patrons has complicated the writer-reader relationship in an age of mass publication. And the nostalgic sense that a more organic writer-patron relationship existed at one time suggests a faith that a fruitful relationship between writer and reader is possible. In less optimistic times (before Woolf reached her first successes as a writer, and again in the darkening political landscape of the late thirties), the very introduction of the patron could appear an intrusion. In "Anon," for instance, an unpublished essay written shortly before her death, Woolf contrasts patronage with an ideal and nostalgic image of an unmediated reader-writer relationship. She paints a self-consciously pastoral image of a lost time, a time when artists were anonymous outsiders who nonetheless had a vital social role to play. Most importantly, it was a time when artists enjoyed a private, unmediated intimacy with their audience:

> Anon singing at the back door was despised. He had no name; he had no place. Yet, even if they felt contempt for the singer,

> whose body took its souls [sic] part in the song, they tolerated him. . . . They needed his comment, his buffoonery. They kept him in the house, tolerating him, as we tolerate those who say out loud what we feel, but are too proud to admit. He used the outsiders [sic] privilege to mock the solemn, to comment upon the established. (383)

The disappearance of Anon, the nameless singer who performs the crucial functions of truth-telling and commentary, is brought about by the printing press, whose ambiguous legacy is a key theme in the essay. Woolf identifies Sir Edmund Spenser as the first poet to derive a "separate existence" from being published: "Spenser then . . . was separate from the minstrel; from the chronicler; and *from his audience*" (389, emphasis mine). The fixing of Spenser's songs in a book compromises his art. Unlike the minstrel who sings freely, with his audience joining in, Spenser now has to deal with the expectations of his audience:

> That audience at once began to exert its pressure. What is the book that will please my patron Sir Philip Sidney? What is the theme that will recommend itself to the Queen? Whom must I praise, whom must I satirise? (390)

Despite the dramatically different context, the passage resonates with Woolf's critique of journalism in *Three Guineas,* where "to write at the command of another person what you do not want to write" is a form of prostitution, its product "adulterated" prose (93–94). Woolf is once again rehearsing one of her primary preoccupations—the appropriate degree and nature of the authority the audience should have over the writer. And while "Anon" is ostensibly a history of English literature, the essay's tone clearly indicates that the lost, imagined ideal—one of private performance and individual give and take—is preferable to the mediated relationship brought about by the press. Once Spenser has connected with his book audience,

> At once come into existence some of those innumerable influences that are to tug, to distort, to thwart; as also they are to stimulate and draw out. The poet is no longer a nameless wandering voice, but attached to his audience. tethered [sic] to one spot and played upon by outside influences. . . . As the book goes out into a larger, a more varied audience these influences be-

> come more and more complex. According to its wealth, its poverty, its education, its ignorance, the public demands what satisfies its own need—poetry, history, instruction, a story to make them forget their own drab lives. The thing that the writer has to say becomes increasingly cumbered. (390)

If the onset of printing brings with it a sort of tyranny of the audience, it also creates a disabling self-consciousness, a sort of vanity, on the part of the writer, who "is no longer a wandering voice, but the voice of a man practising an art, asking for recognition, and bitterly conscious of his relation [to] the world, of the worlds [sic] scorn" (391). Woolf counters but does not balance these negatives with positive influences: the audience also "stimulate[s] and draw[s] out," but the overall sense of the passage is that writing for patrons and for print audiences make "the thing that the writer has to say . . . increasingly cumbered." Patronage here appears as the thin end of a wedge that leads to mass publishing and a fragmented audience.

While her position along it is constantly changing, we see here Woolf navigating a continuum that remains constant throughout her writing life—the continuum between the extremes of artistic self-enclosure and commercialism, private and public writing, complete fidelity to one's idiosyncratic expression and complete sell-out to the market. On the private extreme, Woolf could flirt with the possibility of writing for what Alex Zwerdling has called "the audience of one" ("Coterie" 8), or somewhat less extremely, for the narrowly restricted audience of her family and friends. Swerving toward the public side, she is stung by poor sales and reviews even while chiding herself for her own "vanity." Several diary entries from the early twenties, before she achieved sufficient notice to consider herself a successful novelist, are revealing. "I have made up my mind that I'm not going to be popular, & so genuinely that I look upon disregard or abuse as part of my bargain," she wrote in February 1922. "I'm to write what I like; & they're to say what they like. My only interest as a writer lies, I begin to see, in some queer individuality. . . ." (2: 168). At the same time, she feared this sort of self-enclosure, and wondered whether what was written under such conditions wouldn't itself be valueless. She moves further into this muddle in a 1921 diary entry concerning a party held to congratulate Lytton Strachey on the success of *Queen Victoria*. Probing her desire to be popular, which she ascribes to "vanity," she confesses that she wants "that people should be interested, & watch one's work" (2: 106–07). At the same time, she expresses relief that she has not been pigeonholed by reviewers, tagged as "one of our leading female novelists" (107). (Woolf resists being labeled, even positively, by professional literary middlemen.) Amid this rumination, like a recurring siren's song, comes the lure of writing entirely for private pleasure:

> As I write, there rises somewhere in my head that queer, & very pleasant sense, of something which I want to write; my own point of view. I wonder, though, whether the feeling that I write for half a dozen instead of 1500 will pervert this?—make me eccentric—no, I think not. (107)[9]

This inner conflict can help us to place Woolf regarding the issues of accessibility and elitism that plague modernism. Woolf's attitudes both connect her to contemporaries Eliot and Pound and distinguish her from them. Like them, she felt that writing for a general audience demands compromises in the artist's original vision. Unlike them, she had a contrary desire to respect what she called "the red-blood public" and to engage readers in a cooperative effort to further British letters. The degree to which negative reviews wounded Woolf speaks to her desire for acceptance beyond a narrow assortment of "high-brow" readers.[10] In contrast, Pound and Eliot, particularly in the 1910s and twenties, felt no compunction about thumbing their noses at the great majority of readers.[11] As Joseph Kelly observes in discussing the duo's management of James Joyce's reputation:

> [Eliot] shared with Pound the conviction that artists ought to be free of the financial exigencies that bound them to broad readerships. . . . Since it was Eliot and Pound's conviction that good writing will be scorned and misunderstood by the multitude, bad reviews indicated good literature, or at least good reviews indicated bad literature. (71)

Masked by one of his many artist personae, Pound declared in the 1916 poem "Tenzone": "I beg you, my friendly critics, / Do not set about to procure me an audience" (91).[12] Woolf, by contrast, wanted "that people should be interested"; her periodic embraces of a coterie audience represent visits to the outer edge of the continuum.[13]

Woolf had her protagonist in *Orlando* veer between these poles of self-enclosure (risking self-indulgence) and audience awareness (risking sell-out). Consistent with the Renaissance aristocracy's snobbery about publishing, the sixteenth-century Orlando knows that private dissemination of manuscripts is the respectable writer's way—"to write, much more to publish, was . . . an inexpiable disgrace" (77). He is, however, unable to restrain himself once bitten by "Ambition, the harridan, and Poetry, the witch, and Desire of Fame, the strumpet. . . . [H]e vowed that he would be the first poet of his race and bring immortal lustre upon his name" (81). Woolf here manipulates the gendered language that associates literary commercialism with prostitution: both bring things that are properly private into the public sphere. As Celia Marshik points out, Woolf playfully used such language in discussing her own publications and used her novels to interrogate its reactionary political force. The rhetoric surrounding prostitution was used historically to regulate female sexual behavior, to limit women to the private sphere (both publishing and walking alone in public were, at different times, threats to a woman's "honour"), and to censor texts (Marshik 854). Woolf's narrator, with his hyperbolic and gendered demonization of the desire for publicity, is thus the object of her satire here. When she used such language in her own voice, she tended to celebrate "whoring" and denounce the "respectable" (Marshik 853). The use of satire places the question of audience, often painfully vexing for Woolf in other settings, at a great enough distance to enable her to air it lightly. But if the narrator's scorn of commercialism is satirically deflated, so too is Orlando's idolatry of publication:

> [H]e decided, after several months of such feverish labour, to break a solitude of many years and communicate with the outer world. He had a friend in London . . . who, though of gentle birth, was acquainted with writers and could doubtless put him in touch with some member of that blessed, indeed sacred, fraternity. For, to Orlando in the state he was now in, there was a glory about a man who had written a book and had it printed, which outshone all the glories of blood and state. (82)

This end of the continuum is visited several times in the course of the novel, and, tellingly, it is this urge that twice lands Orlando in the compromising company of Nick Greene, who gives Orlando insight into the ins and outs of the publishing world. Greene is the novel's exemplum of the professional writer, in both its Renaissance and late-Victorian incarnations, a point I will linger on in the second section of this essay. For now it is sufficient to note that Orlando exhibits the writer's hunger to publish several times in the novel. In the Victorian period, Orlando's epic poem "The Oak Tree" expresses to its author its desire "to be read" by "shuffling and beating as a living thing. . . . It wanted to be read. It must be read." (272).

But Orlando also veers to the opposite, private extreme. She reaches her greatest heights of self-expression not in "The Oak Tree" but in her terse love letters to her nineteenth-century husband Shel. Orlando communicates with Shel in a secret language of hyperbolic expressive power. As he describes his sea voyages to her, his phrase "now the biscuits gave out" conveys to Orlando

> the phosphorescence on the waves, the icicles clanking in the shrouds; how he went to the top of the mast in a gale; there reflected on the destiny of man; came down again; had a whisky and soda; went on shore; was trapped by a black woman; repented; reasoned it out; read Pascal; determined to write philosophy; bought a monkey; debated the true end of life; decided in favour of Cape Horn, and so on. (257–58)

Woolf's description of this secret language cleverly emphasizes the contradictory impulses she felt as a writer: her desire to write in a language nuanced and complex enough to convey her ideas and sensations in full and her need to make that language communicable—a goal whose difficulties sent her teetering between self-enclosure and compromise. Orlando's private tongue, which she later uses to communicate with Shel via telegram in a way that will slip private information past the telegraph operator, is

> a cypher language which they had invented between them so that a whole spiritual state of the utmost complexity might be conveyed in a word or two without the telegraph clerk being any the wiser . . . [she] added the words "Rattigan Glumphoboo," which summed it up precisely. . . . "Rattigan Glumphoboo" described a very complicated spiritual state—which if the reader puts all his intelligence at our service he may discover for himself. (282–83)

Woolf's play with this "cypher language" in *Orlando* dramatizes the benefits and costs of modernism, whose experimental language may represent modes of experience that evade conventional language, but at the cost of a loss of accessibility, of communicability—a loss, in short, of audience. The ending of this passage is a tease: even the most active and open-minded reader is unlikely to decode "Rattigan Glumphoboo." And the narrator's layering of audiences in the passage (Shel, the telegraph operator, the biographer/narrator of Orlando, the reader) places this secret language in a suitably complex, multiply mediated exchange in which, nonetheless, only one reader truly has access to it.

Professionalism

Woolf's model reader-writer relationship stands considerably closer to the intimate contact between Shel and Orlando than to the potentially deforming, multiply mediated situation described in "The Patron and the Crocus." Indeed, it is the presence of layers of literary middlemen that pose the threat in that essay and others. These middlemen are what Woolf would have described as professionals—people whose writing, reading, and discussion of literature are too closely identified with or too heavily invested in their status as paid, public pursuits. She figures literary professionals almost without exception as obstacles to writers, readers, and literature—in spite of the fact that Woolf was by almost any definition one of them. She dealt with this fact almost constantly in her reviews and criticism of the mid to late twenties, coming up with various ways to forswear her own authority and professionalism and to situate herself as an amateur, a confidant, a conversant—anything but an authority or a professional.[14]

Gail McDonald has discussed the way T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound led the way in "professionalizing" literature in the 1910s and 1920s, using their criticism as a way of disseminating a specialized vocabulary and connecting an ethic of rigor to the creation and appreciation of literature. They fought against what they perceived as the feminization of literature as both occupation and pastime, striving to imbue literary activity with the authority enjoyed by the sciences (McDonald viii). Like his counterparts in law, medicine, and the sciences, the man of letters was to be a "specialist" who maintained "standards"; Eliot decried the "slackness" he associated with contemporary British culture and with literary journalists, whose "mixed motives" and "dodging of standards" prevented them from attaining sufficient expertise in their subject ("Professional"). McDonald argues that this strain in Eliot's and Pound's campaign for modernism has its roots in American academic debates about how the humanities should be taught and studied in universities, debates between "artes liberales" advocates, who suggested an "amateur spirit" in which education indulged the love of learning without utilitarian considerations, and "liberal-free" theorists, who succeeded in setting up the humanities on a scientific model, in which individual scholars engage in the disinterested pursuit of truth through something approximating the scientific method. This background, McDonald argues, also illuminates why Pound, Eliot, and others were

> anxious not only to compare themselves to doctors and scientists, but also to disassociate themselves emphatically from women. . . . Learning as a leisure activity had begun to shed its ties to the ancient idea of "leisure" as a term of approbation . . . and was increasingly sneered at as a form of dilettantism. In addition, the decline of Latin and Greek, which had been languages possessed solely by educated men and boys, coincided with the entry of women into the masculine stronghold of the university. The need to divest themselves of association with female "accomplishments" was particularly urgent for teachers of the arts whose subjects were, to many minds, unfit for men's attention. (78)

As a rhetorical strategy, claiming professionalism also amounted to a claim of immunity from the commodity economy, which was, as Rita Felski notes, also increasingly gendered feminine (61–62): professionals sell, if anything, services rather than commodities, and their work is imbued with a sense of mission that obscures its economic basis. By reference to professionalism, Pound and Eliot could differentiate their literary journalism from the mass of literary reviews and essays in newspapers and magazines: theirs was motivated by the impersonal search for standards and was thus not a simple cash-for-product exchange, unlike the journalism produced by "men of mixed motives." While Woolf's theories of reading, interpretation, and literary value overlapped in some ways with Eliot's, her attitude toward professionalism could not have differed more.[15]

Woolf's understanding of professionalism is idiosyncratic in that it embraces excessive commercialism along with the more common associations of credentialing, rigor, and distinction that it held for Pound and Eliot. The word *professional* is almost always negatively inflected for Woolf, whether it denotes the academic credentials that were historically denied to women or an excessive emphasis on public perception and financial success.[16] The legendary fin-de-siecle Oxford professor Walter Raleigh, the novelist Lucy Clifford, and Woolf's friend Desmond McCarthy could all become objects of criticism on this head.[17] For Woolf, *professional* can connote being certified by university credentialing to explain and critique literature; it can also attach to popular critics such as Arnold Bennett, who adopted a declamatory, authoritative, professorial tone even though they lacked a university education. Professionalism is above all a state of mind marked by an excessive emphasis on income, authority, or reputation. The professional pose lends what Woolf saw as a specious authority to the critics and professors who mediate between the artist and the audience—too often acting not from love of art or truth or the people but from their own desire for money, prestige, or authority. The presence of intervening professionals compromises the confidence of both artist and reader, threatening to cut off the writer's access to the audience and to convince the audience that its own preferences and responses are second-rate. Against such professional readers Woolf set *private* readers. To give just one instance, she figures the switch from amateur to critic as a fall from innocence in "An Introduction to *Mrs. Dalloway,*" which she wrote for the 1928 edition of the novel. Woolf used this introduction to correct several misapprehensions put in circulation by critics, justifying this step by asserting that critics do not merit the same respect and restraint as amateur readers. She wrote that she had "too much respect for the reader pure and simple" to try to influence his reading of the novel, but that she felt no restraint against correcting "the reader who has put off his innocence and become a critic" (549).

But if becoming professional constituted a loss of innocence, Woolf herself was in many ways among the fallen, academic credentials being the only criterion she did not meet. Like the critics whose power she decried, Woolf gained a platform for her criticism based on her reputation. And she earned good and often much-desired money as a critic. Her lack of education did separate her from a class of professional readers she singled out for particular scorn: professors of literature. She consistently spoke against the emergence of English literature as an academic subject, satirized the phenomenon of the lecture, and reserved her most strident attacks for university-trained literary critics, especially those with professorships. Again appropriating the gendered language of commerce and prostitution, she lamented in a 1931 essay on Edmund Gosse that "in the nineteenth century literature had become, for one reason or another, a profession rather than a vocation, a married women rather than a lady of easy virtue" ("Gosse" 89). She suggested in a late essay that "this lecturing about English literature . . . all this passing of examinations in English literature, which led to all this writing about English literature, was bound in the end to be the death and burial of literature" ("Why?" 233). Of course, admission to the fraternity of university-educated critics and professors was never an option for her. Her anger over her lack of formal education powerfully informs both *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*—and may in part account for her particular scorn for professors. *Orlando*'s second extended portrait of Nick Greene, who emerges in the Victorian era as the well-fed "knight . . . Litt.D. . . . Professor" (276), is aimed equally at literary professionalism as a wide phenomenon and at literary journalism specifically.

Two years before she wrote *Orlando,* Woolf published a review of Professor Walter Raleigh's correspondence that works out some of her animosity toward literary professionalism. In it she casts doubt on the ability of such academic readers to do service to literature. She questions the very raison d'être of literature professors: their students "have to be taught—but what?" she wrote ("Professor" 344). Adopting the premise that such students must be taught "to love literature," she surmises that only critics who have actually written creatively are equipped to do such teaching:

> [T]he critic who makes us love poetry is always sufficiently gifted to have had experiences of his own. . . . It is in the toil and strife of writing that they have forced the door open and gone within and told us what they have seen there. (344–45)

With these premises underlying her argument, Woolf calls into question Raleigh's reputation as a gifted teacher:

> He talked his lectures almost out of his head. He joked, he told stories. He made the undergraduates rock with laughter. He drew them in crowds to his lecture room. And they went away

> loving something or other. Perhaps it was Keats. Perhaps it was the British Empire. Certainly it was Walter Raleigh. But we should be much surprised if anybody went away loving poetry, loving the art of letters. (344)

In the early and mid twenties such deprecations of literary professionalism are too numerous to count in Woolf's nonfiction. She sets the professionalism of critics like Raleigh and J. B. Priestly (a Cambridge BA) against the amateur reading of "private people," reading removed from the politics of the journalistic struggle, untainted by the trappings of masculine authority. Thus Woolf identified the favored common reader as "worse educated" than the professional critic or scholar ("Common Reader"), observed approvingly, in a 1927 review of E. M. Forster's *The Art of Fiction*, that Forster was "not a scholar" ("Art" 599), and leveled the following jab at Priestly, in her reading notes for a 1924 review: "At the age of 50 Priestly will be saying, 'Why don't the highbrows admire me? It isn't true that I only write for money.' . . . I [Woolf] invent this phrase for Bennett & Priestly 'the tradesmen of letters'" ("Appreciations" 442n1). Her slams at professionalism are complemented by a consistent elevation of nonprofessional reading and criticism—of reading done, to quote "The Common Reader," "in all those rooms, too humble to be called libraries, yet full of books, where the pursuit of reading is carried on by private people" and of criticism carried out in private conversation, at tea tables and in parlors.[18]

A typical move in Woolf's book reviews in this period is to self-consciously eschew her authority, to undermine the purported objectivity of the review in the course of writing it. As Froula argues, Woolf "portrays her authority as inherently contingent and social and her contemporary and future audiences as collaborators . . ." (519). Woolf particularly undermined the typical adoption of an objective, authoritative voice because she saw such conventions themselves as obstacles to the writer's finding the truth. This limitation caused her to question repeatedly the value of most reviews. In a 1925 essay on George Moore, Woolf remarks that

> The only criticism worth having at present is that which is spoken, not written—spoken over wineglasses and coffeecups late at night, flashed out on the spur of the moment by people passing who have not time to finish their sentences, let alone consider the dues of editors or the feelings of friends. ("Moore" 156)

One need not be hyperanalytical to see the paradox: Woolf's essay on Moore's fiction is written rather than spoken, prepared with the "dues of editors" in mind. ("George Moore" appeared first in *Vogue*.) The quotation is one of many instances in which Woolf paradoxically uses her "professional" platform to distance herself from the professionalization of literature and align herself instead with smart but nonauthoritative, nonprofessional readers—the type who issue their criticism "over wineglasses and coffeecups." Walter Raleigh, in contrast to such imagined amateurs, seemed to Woolf to have spoken of literature only professionally, never in the friendlier confines of domestic spaces: she found in his letters no sign of "the unprofessional talk, the talk which is talked among friends when business hours are over," which prompted her to ask, "Is this all that the Professor of English Literature has to say?" ("Professor" 343). Raleigh's great failing for Woolf is that his literary work is entirely professionalized, segregated from the daily domestic life where, in Woolf's imaginary republic of readers, the best in reading and criticism takes place. The images Woolf uses to describe the spaces for productive dialogue—private libraries, tea tables, wine glasses, coffee cups—like such phrases as "tradesmen of letters," carry class baggage: they all suggest a level of material comfort and an access to the upper-middle-class spaces and lifestyle typically unavailable to women (and men) who must earn their living. And in relocating the proper sphere of criticism from the lecture hall and the weekly review to a nonauthoritative, collaborative domestic sphere, they suggest a gendered critique of professionalism that answers back to masculinist claims of authority, whether from professors who fill lecture halls and journal pages with declamatory criticism or from modernists who aspire to similar authority in a language that casts out women.[19] Eliot wrote in 1920: "Let the public . . . ask why it has never heard of the poems of T. E. Hulme . . . and why it has heard of the poems of Lady Precocia Pondoeuf and has seen a photograph of the nursery in which she wrote them" (qtd. in McDonald 79). For Woolf, nurseries and dining rooms and sitting rooms "too humble to be called libraries" were the sources of the most humane and resourceful criticism; lecture halls and journal pages were material vessels of masculine power.

In *Orlando,* Nick Greene emerges from 300 years of obscurity robed in the accoutrements of power, a credentialed and decorated literary professional. Some things haven't changed: Greene is still a nay-sayer to contemporary literature, his standard of greatness now "Marlow, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson—those were the giants" (278). In both eras Greene denounces the commercialism of literature—writers are "in the pay of booksellers" and "turn out any trash that pays their tailor's bills" (278)—even as he unself-consciously feathers his own nest. While the Renaissance Greene duped Orlando into providing him with a pension, the Victorian Greene makes a cushy living off his university position and his journalism: "He had grown sleek: literature had been a prosperous pursuit evidently . . ." (279).

The Victorian Greene provides Orlando with an insight into the literary marketplace that forces her again to consider the question of audience. Orlando, ignorant of the publishing world, has come to London aiming to circulate her manuscript, in the Renaissance fashion, among the literati: once again the desire to be read has won out over the impulse toward privacy. She encounters Greene, who tells her about the emergence of the nineteenth-century publishing market and offers to use his influence to guide her epic poem "The Oak Tree" to success: "As for the reviewers, he would himself write a line to Mr. ____ who was the most influential; then a compliment—say a little puff of her own poems—addressed to the wife of the editor of the ____ never did any harm. He would call ____" (281). Thus does Orlando learn that institutional power and clique politics (of the sort Woolf encountered in the "Athenaeum world" of John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield, and over which she presided at the Hogarth Press) influence reviews, which promise to influence sales. Greene's material success and his intimate knowledge of the workings of the literary marketplace suggest that his professionalism does not place him above the emerging literary commodity economy: indeed, his professional status makes him a force in the literary marketplace and has likely been promoted or enhanced by his ability to manipulate it.

Greene's writing particularly brings home to Orlando the difference between the Renaissance and Victorian literary worlds. Wandering into a book shop, she finds it filled with "works about other works by Sir Nicholas and a score of others whom, in her ignorance, she supposed, since they were bound and printed, to be very great writers too" (284). But sitting down to read Greene's article on John Donne, Orlando is driven to despair:

> reading Sir Nicholas and his friends . . . she somehow got the impression . . . they made one feel—it was an extremely uncom-

> fortable feeling—one must never, never say what one thought. . . . They made one feel, she continued, that one must always, always write like somebody else. (285)

Orlando rebels against this critical pressure. Casting aside Greene's article, she arrives at a renewed belief that the purest forms of writing are private, free of the claims of the marketplace and the public world. Validating the private language she shares with Shel, Orlando observes:

> [I]t is not articles by Nick Greene on John Donne nor eight-hour bills nor covenants nor factory acts that matter; it's something useless, sudden, violent; something that costs a life; red, blue, purple; a spirt; a splash; . . . free from taint, dependence, soilure of humanity or care for one's kind . . . (287)

The novel will conclude with Orlando deciding, despite her ultimate success, that "praise and fame" have nothing to do with poetry, which is rightly "a secret transaction, a voice answering a voice" (325).

As we have seen, by the time she aired them in *Orlando,* Woolf had worked over many of these same issue in many of her essays and reviews of the midtwenties. Woolf wrote *Orlando* during a period of unprecedented success, both financially and in terms of reputation, and so she was able, within limits, to allow the conflicting imperatives of art and commerce, privacy and publicity, to do battle in the novel without conclusive results, even (implicitly) to advocate commercialism by parodying gendered, anticommercial language. The very status of *Orlando* as a novel that is secretly about Woolf's lover Vita Sackville-West and is replete with inside jokes to her, but with which Woolf happily nonetheless "goes public," marks a straddling of the private/public boundary. *Orlando* went on to be Woolf's greatest commercial success to date: Woolf was very much "in the pay of booksellers" as she was working out these issues in the late twenties.

Professionalism, though, was another matter—one that struck very close to home for Woolf, who wished for creative as well as financial reasons to continue her work as a critic while paradoxically trying to eschew the authority that position entailed. Compared with her slippery engagement with the private/public and art/commerce distinctions in *Orlando,* Woolf's take on professionalism is comparatively monologic. She gives no quarter to its representative, Nick Greene, nor to the public authority he enjoys, nor to the illusion of autonomy, of freedom from entanglements with the literary marketplace, that his professionalism implies. Her stridency on this particular point suggests overcompensation: the professionalism she so decried in her public writings was perhaps so troubling because she was so implicated in it herself. Zwerdling suggests as much when, in a discussion of Woolf's later attack on professionalism in *Three Guineas,* he argues that

> the pattern of [Woolf's] own career—her restless literary experiments and perfectionism . . . her highly competitive attitude toward contemporaries . . . suggests that she could also describe the disease from personal experience. (*Real World* 94)

In November 1928, as sales of *Orlando* neared 50 to 60 copies a day (*Diary* 3: 212), Woolf mulled how to fertilize her mind for her next project, ultimately to become *The Waves:*

> I think I must read Ibsen & Shakespeare & Racine. And I will write something about them; for that is my best spur, my mind being what it is; then I read with fury & exactness; otherwise I slip & skip: I am a lazy reader. But no: I am surprised & a little disquieted by the remorseless severity of my mind: that it never stops reading & writing; makes me write on Geraldine Jewsbury, on Hardy, on Women—is too professional, too little any longer a dreamy amateur. (*Diary* 3: 210)

The professional Woolf sought to slay in *Orlando* and numerous essays lived within as well as without, and threatened to bully the amateur within into submission. The dreamy amateur could not enjoy the privacy of the study free of the professional's impertinence. The depth of this inner conflict led Woolf intermittently to entertain various idylls of intimacy—the nameless private singer, the tea-table chat, the love letter—as fanciful alternatives to the real conditions of the public sphere.

Notes

1. Eliot's vacillation on this issue testifies to its vexed nature for modernists. In 1920 he wrote: "it is just as good at the present time to have an audience of two hundred as two thousand, and perhaps a better investment" (*Letters* 383). In 1930 he hoped for "as large and miscellaneous an audience as possible." And

in 1943 he wrote: "if a poet gets a large audience very quickly, that is a rather suspicious circumstance: for it leads us to fear that he is not really doing anything new. . . . But that a poet should have the right, small audience in his own time *is* important" (*On Poetry* 11).

2. The tension between private and public is a central topic in studies of Virginia Woolf. Most scholars see Woolf critiquing the gendered separation of the spheres, celebrating the emergence of women's voices in the public sphere, and decrying their long-time imprisonment in the private sphere of the home. Anna Snaith, for instance, argues that Woolf's project of writing women's biography as "Lives of the Obscure" was a way of bringing private lives into the public sphere ("'My Poor Private Voice'" 99–101); for Snaith, Woolf writes back to a masculinist tradition in which women's experience is excluded from traditional history and biography and thus from the public sphere (97). Merry Pawlowski sees Woolf's *Three Guineas* and *A Sketch of the Past* as attempts to "displace the boundaries between the public and private arenas as gendered masculine and feminine" (257) as a means to critique both an increasingly masculinist, militarist tone in public discourse and the historical "abusive confinement [of women] in the private house" (260). Celia Marshik argues that Woolf felt women "had to challenge the separate spheres of ideology before they could assume a nondomestic role in the world" (853). In a nuanced analysis, Marianne DeKoven places Woolf's sympathies largely on the private side of the barrier, arguing that Woolf's primary aim in her fiction is to "valorize and inhabit a reconfigured feminine interiority" (235). While this interiority is in "dynamic conversation with and orientation toward the public," DeKoven argues, "this public is nonetheless recontained and transformed as the private" (235). I contend that Woolf used the public/private frame in ways that were anything but dogmatic, monological, or consistent. Her understanding of the division of the spheres changed over time. Thus I would second Alex Zwerdling's observation, in *Virginia Woolf and the Real World*, that Woolf's late realization "that public and private are really inseparable was not a sudden revelation; it was an insight Woolf gradually won over the course of her career" (25).

While a number of critics have examined public/private dynamics in *Orlando,* the novel's commentary on the literary marketplace has not been central to these discussions. J. J. Wilson, whose focus lies in defining *Orlando* as an "anti-novel," notes in passing that Nick Greene is the "most devastating" element of *Orlando's* attack on critics, which expands into a larger critique of patriarchy and the "great men" view of history. "In finding great men dull," Wilson writes, "Woolf asserts again her belief in the private present moment rather than in the public ceremonial monument" (178). Marshik, in discussing *Orlando,* analogizes the regulation of prostitution to the censorship of texts (in that both processes attempt to restrict sexuality to the private sphere) but does not discuss the topology of the literary marketplace beyond the prevalence of censorship within it. See also Snaith's study of the private/public divide in Woolf's narration, "Virginia Woolf's Narrative Strategies."

3. For Woolf herself, this binary between private communication and commercialism is not as severe as it is for her character Orlando: the desire for publicity could work for Woolf in the service of social activism, as most clearly evident in *A Room of One's Own* or *Three Guineas.* The latter text, though, is marked by an increasing anxiety about the writer's ability to reach a politically effective audience, given the press's ability to "burke discussion of any desirable subject" (162n16). The character Orlando shows no such social engagement.

4. The saturation of the book market and the failures of the reviewing system are commonplaces in the weekly, quarterly, and monthly journals of the twenties and thirties. Joseph McAleer notes that for a three-month period in 1929, British book publishers issued an average of 60 titles a day (57). Many writers felt that the newspapers and magazines that reviewed books were ill-equipped to deal with this flood of titles, and thus the best work being published was in danger of disappearing unnoticed. See for instance Douglas Goldring.

5. Woolf did take part in various projects to ensure patronage for others, for instance the "Bel Esprit" scheme to gather private contributions to support T. S. Eliot. See Woolf's *Diary* 2: 183 and 204.

6. Woolf wrote in her diary that she vowed in 1926 to earn more money by her writing and to make arrangements with her husband to ensure enough expendable income: "For part of my misery was the perpetual limitation of everything; no chairs, or beds, no comfort, no beauty; & no freedom to move, all of which I vowed then and there to win" (*Diary* 3: 212). For information on Woolf's earnings in 1927 and 1928, see *Diary* 3: 149. See also Lee 557.

7. In acknowledging a productive simplicity in the aristocratic system—and the difficulties of reaching an intelligent audience in a more pluralistic readership—Woolf is grappling with the same difficulty that led Ezra Pound (and, to a lesser degree, T. S. Eliot) to actively call for a return to more aristocratic models of government, which they saw as more conducive to the production of great art.

8. For Woolf's collaborative models of the reader-writer relationship, see, for instance, "On Re-reading Novels," in which she urges a more active style of reading as a way to "encourage the novelist to find out—and that is all we ask of him—what it is that he means and how best to show it us" (344). Writing of Woolf's construction of this reader-writer alliance, Jeanne Dubino notes that in "The Patron and the Crocus," Woolf figures the writer and the reader as,

successively, sexual partners, Siamese twins, and, finally, allies, suggesting that "the reader and writer are political entities whose alliance could result in a great republic of the imagination" (Dubino 133).

The degree to which Woolf's concept of the "common reader" ennobles the audience is a matter of some debate. See Rosenberg for a useful summary of earlier readings of the "common reader" as a democratic or egalitarian concept (7n1). Rosenberg says the concept has the "rhetorical function" of setting up a dialogic relationship between Woolf and the reader. Susan Stanford Freidman describes the common reader as one who "refuses to accept the authority of the scholar and critic" (119) and whose method is "an expression of agency freed from the need to measure up to accuracy" (118). Freidman acknowledges that the common reader is anything but common in that Woolf expects her to be extremely well-read. Freidman notes incisively that Woolf sought not merely to eliminate phallogocentric models of critical "authority, subjectivity, and identity" but also to create "new forms of them suited to women" (105). While I do not mean to argue that the common reader is not a progressive concept in its ceding of authority from writer to reader and from professional to amateur, I would suggest that Woolf's fears as well as her hopes for the audience are embedded in the concept. In the unpublished "Byron and Mr. Briggs," originally planned as the introduction to *The Common Reader*, Woolf suggests that

> The common reader is formidable and respectable and even has power over great critics and great masterpieces in the long run because he likes reading and will not let Coleridge do his reading for him. . . . But [the reader's] is an unguided passion, voluntary, individual, and thus *capable of doing enormous harm* as a glance at contemporary literature is bound to prove. (478, emphasis added)

Woolf was not consistently comfortable with readerly authority and influence.

9. Nancy Walker rightly notes that Woolf always envisioned an audience for her writing, even it were the "half a dozen" she suggests in this diary entry (277, 293). Even Woolf's diary was in this sense not entirely private. Walker points to a 1928 diary entry in which Woolf begins by saying she'll write the next few lines "for my own pleasure" but stops herself and notes, "if one writes only for one's own pleasure . . . the convention of writing is destroyed" (*Diary* 3: 201). Walker also notes that Woolf envisioned culling the diaries for materials for a memoir and imagined her husband editing them for publication after her death (277).

10. Woolf's diary offers scores of examples of her responses to negative reviews. She was perhaps most wounded by the critical dismissal of the short-story collection *Monday or Tuesday,* which predated her successes of the late twenties.

Of these reviews she wrote, "[T]hey don't see that I'm after something interesting. So that makes me suspect that I'm not" (2: 106).

11. Mark Morrisson suggests that, particularly before World War I, Pound and Eliot engaged seriously in efforts to reach wide audiences for the journals *Egoist* and *Blast,* using contemporaneous methods of advertising and promotion, critiquing capitalism and bourgeois aesthetics even as they gave in to the promise of wider audiences through the contemporaneous literary marketplace's means of production (85). Of course, these wider audiences never materialized; this effort's promising starts "evaporated during the war, and, for the near future, modernist art and literature moved more decisively into a separate aesthetic sphere" (115–16). Morrisson's observation shows the modernist desire for wide public influence, paradoxically couched in a rejection of current mass tastes.

12. See also Pound's "Causa":

> I join these words for four people,
> Some others may overhear them,
> O world, I am sorry for you,
> You do not know these four people. (94)

13. In making this argument, I am disagreeing with Zwerdling, who goes too far in narrowing Woolf's desired audience, suggesting that Woolf wrote her 1920s novels with the coterie of Bloomsbury in mind. He suggests that writing for this elite and reduced audience was a decisive factor in Woolf's fiction, allowing her to produce "the highly compressed, allusive, and distinctly challenging art" of *Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, Jacob's Room,* and *The Waves* ("Coterie" 9). But her diary entries agonizing about the reception of her books make clear that she sought acceptance beyond her circle of friends throughout the 1920s, and *Orlando*, published in 1928, reaches no settled conclusion on this question.

14. Froula suggests that Woolf uses conversational and domestic tropes in her nonfiction to break down the boundaries between reader and writer by "deliberately constructing her authority as contingent, biased, opinionated, and fallible and by welcoming [her readers'] voices into her text" (519).

15. See Michael Kauffman's excellent essay on the points of convergence and divergence between Eliot and Woolf.

16. Woolf's 1931 essay "Professions for Women" might seem an exception to her usual, negatively inflected view of professionalism. While she begins the essay by applauding the existence of professions for women, her attitude to-

ward literary journalism is decidedly ambivalent: she clearly favors the "profession of literature" (for example creative writing, the "profession" to which Aphra Behn led the way in *A Room of One's Own*) over that of literary journalism, remarking that it is "far pleasanter" to devise stories of one's own than to write "reviews of famous novels" (239). Furthermore, Woolf is careful not to identify with the nonliterary professionals in her audience, remarking that she used her first journalistic paycheck to buy a cat—a sign of "how little I deserve to be called a professional woman, how little I know of the struggles and difficulties of such lives" (236). I believe Bonnie Kime Scott is correct to note that Woolf values the professional relationship between Chloe and Olivia in *A Room of One's Own* (Scott 216). But as Woolf's diary entry on Lucy Clifford (2: 12, qtd. here in note 17) suggests, her attitudes toward women in the *literary* professions are more ambivalent, despite Scott's observation that Woolf "entered into creative and supportive pairings and networks with professional women" (216).

17. I discuss Woolf's essay on Raleigh, "A Professor of Life," below. On McCarthy, see *Diary* 2: 155-57. Of Clifford, Woolf writes,

> if I could reproduce her talk of money, royalties, editions, & reviews, I should think myself a novelist; & the picture might serve me for a warning. . . . oh the sight of the dirty quills, & the scored blotting paper & her hands & nails not very clean either—& money, reviews, proofs, helping hands, slatings—what an atmosphere of rancid cabbage & old clothes stewing in their old water! (*Diary* 2: 12)

18. Rosenberg notes that the dialogue or the conversation was Woolf's favorite model for reading. She cites "Byron and Mr. Briggs" and "Mr. Conrad: A Conversation," both of which dramatize the acts of literary interpretation and evaluation as conversations (4–5).

19. My reading is consistent with Rachel Bowlby's general observation that Woolf "constantly associates certainty and conventionality with a complacent masculinity which she sees as setting the norms for models of individual and historical development" (15).

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Speculation, Tourism, and *The Professor's House*

Paula Kot

In the summer of 1915 Willa Cather visited Mesa Verde National Park, probably to gather information for what eventually became "Tom Outland's Story," book 2 of *The Professor's House* (1925).[1] The following January she published an article in the *Denver Times* that spells out for readers precisely "what the Mesa Verde means" (qtd. in Rosowski and Slote 84)—a remedy for modern society's estrangement from the land.[2] Cather explains that the cliff dwellers "seem not to have struggled to overcome their environment. They accommodated themselves to it, interpreted it and made it personal; lived in a dignified relation with it. In more senses than one they built themselves into it" (85). She suggests that tourists to Mesa Verde could recapture this organic relationship. For Cather, the tourist gaze—as a modern form of ritual that restores the relation between landscape, aesthetic value, and cultural heritage—could heal the alienation from the land that Americans had suffered through the dominance of speculators, who treated land as a commodity.[3]

In the 1916 Mesa Verde article Cather pointedly ignores the commercial aspects of promoting travel to the relatively new national park, but because she was an established "authoress"—a fact proclaimed in the headline to her article, "Colorado Show Place as Authoress Sees It" (82)—her vision of the mesa and its inhabitants attracted tourist dollars to the area. Despite her implied criticism of the commodification of land, her article played into the speculative fever still strong in Colorado, whose economy was expanding from the extraction of natural resources to tourism.

Although Cather suppressed the economics of tourism in her article, on some level she must have recognized that the ruins—which she represents as preserving "like a fly in amber" (84) a "human record" (85) of an organic relationship to the land—had been treated as a commodity ever since their discovery by white explorers and settlers. Certainly in her later ruminations on the meaning of Mesa Verde in *The Professor's House,* she engaged rather than denied the complexities of Western history. She depicted the inextricable relationship between the stories used to recover the values of the past and the entrepreneur—a relationship that challenged her belief in the transcendence of art. Cather recycled in *The Professor's House* a great deal of material from the *Denver Times* article, basing Tom Outland's adventure at Blue Mesa on her earlier depiction of Dick Wetherill's discovery of Cliff Palace at Mesa Verde.[4] But from the later perspective she acknowledged what was anathema to her: the impossibility of imagining an ideal outside the language of business.[5]

Perhaps because her own father's speculation jeopardized the family's finances, Cather was deeply suspicious of land speculation and speculators. She had also been influenced by the populist movement of the 1880s and 1890s, which argued that speculation obliterated the ideal of an organic relationship to the land.[6] As Patricia Nelson Limerick explains, although white settlers in the West viewed "the acquisition of property as a cultural imperative," speculation

> stripped the social fiction of property of all its softer, justifying touches. Speculation revealed ownership to be a purely conceptual act. . . . Property could never look more arbitrary or distant from the ideal of the farmer-citizen made secure and independent by his land. (55, 69)

Cather demonized speculation as the source of estrangement from the land in an early story, "El Dorado: A Kansas Recessional" (1901; *Collected Short Fiction* 293–310). But the phenomenon of speculation had so thoroughly permeated Western thinking that Cather—like the historical Dick Wetherill and her character Tom Outland—found it impossible to conceive of a reality free of it. The intoxication associated with its risky but possibly remunerative activity was an integral part of Western adventure. Speculation privileged above all else getting there first, making the discovery that would lead to wealth and fame. Populists' antispeculation campaign could not squelch its appeal; it had sunk too deeply into the emotional aura surrounding land settlement in the West.

"Tom Outland's Story" in *The Professor's House* represents Cather's belated, grudging understanding of the "real story" of Western adventure. Through Tom Outland, who like Dick Wetherill was both a consumer and a supplier of the tourist experience, she confessed that the idyllic world of Blue Mesa could not be kept separate from speculation. Thus she also confessed her awareness that speculation had indelibly shaped Tom's story—and her own as well. At first glance, this reading might seem at odds with Cather's many commentaries on aesthetics in which she sought to sever art from the commercial culture that she abhorred. Cather bluntly insisted that "Economics and art are strangers" (*Cather on Writing* 27). Like tourism, art for Cather was "a search for something for which there is no market demand . . . where the values are intrinsic and have nothing to do with standardized values" (103). As John Hilgart points out, Cather struggled in her fiction "to preserve the thing of beauty from the marketplace" (377).[7] My claim also seems at odds with Cather's own stated intentions for "Tom Outland's Story." In a 1938 letter, she explained that she inserted Outland's Blue Mesa story of a "world above the world" (*Professor's House* 240) into the center of the novel to open a window onto a realm free from the commodification that stifled Godfrey St. Peter's home and American culture in general (*Cather on Writing* 30–32). Not surprisingly, then, critics have traditionally interpreted Tom Outland as a vehicle for Cather's idealism. Yet I argue that Cather's revisions of the meaning of Mesa Verde mark her surrender of youthful idealism and her consciousness of the indissoluble ties between land economics and storytelling. For Cather's bitter resistance to speculation's commodification of landscape spurred her to construct her ideal in opposition to it. Even as she sought to validate the authenticity of her 1916 vision of Mesa Verde in *The Professor's House,* she perceived that the drama of discovery bore the imprint of the very market forces that Outland—and she herself—had sought to escape.

Constructing a world above the world: Cather and Mesa Verde

When Cather visited Mesa Verde in 1915, she became one of 663 tourists who visited that season.[8] C. B. Kelly, who had obtained the transportation concession in the park (Smith 93), drove her from the town of Mancos, Colorado, out to the park (Harrell 56). Cather stayed at the tent camp run by park concessionaire Oddie Jeep, the daughter of park superintendent Thomas Rickner and the wife of park ranger Fred Jeep (Harrell 56). There she met the Smithsonian archaeologist Jesse Walter Fewkes, a "romantic" whose goal was to make the "mystical red man known to the literate public" (Smith 71). Although Fewkes was later criticized for his shoddy work at the site (73), he could tell good stories, and Oddie Jeep—on the lookout for ways to please her paying guests—had asked Fewkes to tell campfire stories to tourists (Harrell 66). Fewkes obliged with interpretive tales that delighted tourists perhaps as much for their delivery as for their content. Jack Rickner, the superintendent's son, later recalled the special effects that made these tales memorable:

> Dr. Fewkes gave talks at a camp fire on the ledge below the museum looking towards Spruce Tree House. . . . Across the canyon there was a ditch cut in the rock. We took black powder & fuse. . . . When he came to the point in his lecture where the ball of fire came out of the earth we set the powder off—and the Indians came out of the ground on to this earth. (qtd. in Harrell 66)

Cather spent a week on the mesa and must have been present for at least one of Fewkes's talks (66), but she did not write about them in her article on Mesa Verde for the *Denver Times*. In order to represent Mesa Verde as rising above "the bustling business of the world," she ignored Fewkes's stories, which were motivated by a mixture of his own romanticism, Oddie Jeep's commercialism, and a common admiration for Hollywood-type spectacle. To include these talks would have revealed the extent to which even those individuals with the best of intentions for the cliff dwellings also "meant to realize on them," to borrow the words of Tom Outland's worldly companion Rodney Blake (*Professor's House* 244).

Like Fewkes's interpretive talks, the development of Mesa Verde—its transformation from an inconveniently located archaeological site into a tourist attraction and national park—represents the wedding of idealism and commercialism. The idealistic treatment of Mesa Verde as a cultural preserve was, moreover, only a second way to make money from the cliff dwellings. The first way, tied to an extraction economy, was more obviously exploitative: digging up pots and other artifacts to be sold as curios. In fact, many viewed the "resources" of the cliff dwellings as a commodity akin to gold or silver. And like the ore in mines, the artifacts at Mesa Verde were not limitless. Thus B. K. Wetherill, whose Alamo Ranch bordered the cliff dwellings and whose family guided tourists through the ruins, wrote to the Smithsonian in 1890 to warn that "the valleys of Mancos and Montezuma have been pretty thoroughly dug over, it being about the only means of support of quite a number of people" (Smith 40). Viewed from one perspective, B. K. Wetherill wrote to the Smithsonian in order to protect a national treasure. In the words of his son Al Wetherill, members of the family felt they "were the custodians of a priceless heritage" (Wetherill 130, Harrell 46). As Duane Smith explains, "Americans in the 1890s were showing more concern for conservation and preservation. The Wetherills, in their own quiet way, were in the vanguard of the so far unsuccessful movement to establish some form of protection for the ruins" (22). Seen from a different perspective, though, B. K. Wetherill's attempt to preserve the ruins before they were completely stripped grew out of a desire to preserve his family's investment in the tourist trade. Tourists wanted to see more than just empty ruins when they visited the cliff dwellings; they wanted to see whatever material evidence was left of the day-to-day lives of the cliff dwellers. For this reason, a museum housing artifacts was eventually established on the mesa (Smith 93). And of course, many wanted to take home a souvenir that would remind them of this past. In a cautiously worded response to later accusations that the Wetherills and their guests had in effect vandalized the cliff dwellings, Al Wetherill explained that "those who came as tourists were aware that we would allow no damage nor *wanton* pilfering" (Wetherill 130; emphasis added). Allowing tourists to pilfer a pot or two was good for business. Having the ruins officially recognized as part of the national heritage was even better. In the growing tourist trade, nationalistic rhetoric went hand in hand with economic development.

Simultaneously patriotic and speculative, the development of Mesa Verde must have "teased" Cather's imagination for years.[9] For the meaning of the cliff dwellings—as a national icon or as a commodity—could be reinterpreted by those who stood to profit from it and could change with changing attitudes toward the landscape. Thus B. K. Wetherill was soon joined by others who also petitioned to preserve the ruins before they were destroyed by pothunters and vandals. Under the administration of conservationist President Theodore Roosevelt, legislation to preserve the ruins as a national park was finally passed (Smith 56). Typically, setting aside land as a park was hotly contested; white settlers often resisted the creation of national forests, for example, because it would block them from developing "with minimum payment and little or no government regulation" (62) whatever resources lay on the land. When it was proposed that the cliff dwellings be set aside as a national park, however, the residents of Mancos and the greater southwestern Colorado area were overjoyed. The land around the cliff dwellings had been overgrazed, and the mining prospects were poor, so developing tourism to the area by creating a new national park was akin to striking a gold mine (62). After striking it rich by digging pots and exhausting the supply, these residents hoped to dig into the deep pockets of wealthy tourists. As in other areas of the US, tourism became the "answer to all economic problems" at Mesa Verde (Dona Brown 2). And the people of Mancos, like the Wetherills, saw no conflict of interest between preserving the historic ruins and preserving their investments. The testimony in support of the bills to turn Mesa Verde into a national park before the House and Senate in 1905 and 1906 reflects this mixture of idealistic and economic motives. The testimony

> called attention to the national significance of the ruins, the destruction that had already occurred [from pothunters], the unfit nature of the land for agriculture and its classification as "poor range at best," and the potential tourist market. (Smith 57)

Cather, though, felt commercialism tarnished the experience of visiting the ruins, so she tried to remove it from her representation of the Mancos landscape. In her attempt to unearth the meaning of the cliff dwellings in her 1916 article, she found it necessary to suppress its economic aspects. Through her idealism, even the town of Mancos, which had developed itself into a mecca for tourists and had openly competed with the towns of Durango and Cortez for the distinction of gateway to the ruins (Smith 37–38), is transformed. Certainly she provides specific advice for tourists in her article, telling them, for example, that the conductor on the Denver & Rio Grande train to Mancos "has been on that run for fourteen years and . . . can give you all sorts of helpful information" (82). But she takes great pains to conceal the dollars changing hands in the process. Thus, "the station agent, the hotel people and the camp outfitters," those individuals integral to the tourist trade in Mancos, are labeled "cordial" rather than, say, business-like. To describe the effect that such a trip has on a visitor, Cather writes: "Your business transactions become of minor importance, and before you know it you are staying on in Mancos because you like the people" (82–83). For Cather, visiting Mesa Verde is about recovering a period of time when people such as the cliff dwellers were "absolutely unenterprising in the modern American sense" (85).

By ostensibly removing "modern" American-style enterprise from her portrayal of Mesa Verde tourism, Cather could redefine a trip to the cliff dwellings as "a reproach" (84) to the world of business. She sets up a series of oppositions between the past and the present, and through them constructs a gap that enables her to "maintain a sense of innocence" about the past, particularly about the commercial aspects of the "discovery" and development of the ruins.[10] This series of oppositions, moreover, represents one of the defining characteristics of the tourist experience; as John Urry points out, tourists are only willing to consume a particular experience if they believe it will "generate pleasurable experiences which are different from those typically encountered in everyday life" (1). In Cather's construction, the tourist experience represents an escape from what she would later call the "new commercialism" (*Professor's House* 140), though as Dona Brown argues, "far from opposing [commercialism], tourism was an integral part of it" (12). According to Cather, the cliff dwellers' architecture, "absolutely harmonious with its site and setting," contrasts with the "ugly little American towns" tourists pass through while traveling from the East to reach the park (84). The cliff dwellers' lives were "settled" and ritualistic—"generations went on gravely and reverently repeating the past"—while the present generation of Americans continues "battling for anything new" (85).[11] And Cather joins the tour operators whose livelihoods depend on constructing the tourist experience as an escape when she implies that tourists to Mesa Verde could regain this past in its pure form.

In Cather's scheme, Dick Wetherill, B. K. Wetherill's son and the supposed discoverer of the Cliff Palace ruin, becomes both the original and model tourist. Cather thus imaginatively ushers her readers into the mesa through Dick Wetherill's perspective:

> Any approach to the Mesa Verde is impressive, but one must always think with envy of the entrada of Richard Wetherill, the first white man who discovered the ruins in its cañons forty-odd

> years ago. Until that time the mesa was entirely unexplored, and was known only as a troublesome place into which cattle wandered off, and from which they never came back. . . . The Wetherills had a ranch west of Mancos. One December day a boy brought word to the ranch house that a bunch of cattle had got away and gone up into the mesa. The same thing had happened before, and young Wetherill said that this time he was going after his beasts. He rode off with one of his cow men and they entered the mesa by a deep cañon from the Mancos river, which flows at its base. . . . After a long stretch of hard climbing young Wetherill happened to glance up at the great cliffs above him, and there, thru a veil of lightly falling snow, he saw practically as it stands today and as it had stood for 800 years before, the cliff palace—not a cliff dwelling, but a cliff village; houses, courts, terraces and towers, a place large enough to house 300 people, lying in a natural archway let back into the cliff. It stood as if it had been deserted yesterday; undisturbed and undesecrated, preserved by the dry atmosphere and by its inaccessibility. (83–84)

Cather marks this moment as the quintessential tourist experience. It represents what Urry calls a "departure" from the "established routines and practises of everyday life" (2)—for Wetherill, from the work of cattle ranching. In her description of Wetherill's discovery, Cather abruptly moves from the past tense to the present when she concludes, "That is what the Mesa Verde means" (84). In other words, Cather also assumes a universal tourist gaze. Mesa Verde has the same meaning now as it did to Wetherill: the preservation of the cliff dwellers' organic relation to the land in an "undisturbed and undesecrated" form. Tourists who view what Wetherill first saw can experience the same sense of reverence he felt toward these ruins. Their confrontation with this preserved culture would lead them to recognize the superiority of the cliff dwellers' values, "custom, ritual, integrity of tradition" (86), which had been reaffirmed by Dick Wetherill's awed recognition of their worth.

In order to render Dick Wetherill's tourist gaze as ideal, however, Cather had to suppress the fact that Dick and his family were speculators as well as would-be custodians of a cultural treasure—that he mixed business with idealism and that he was a supplier as well as consumer of the tourist experience. Cather did not mention this in her article, but when she visited the park in 1915, she made a point of meeting with Dick's brother, Clayton Wetherill,[12] in order to hear what she later referred to as the "real story" of the discovery (*Cather on Writing* 32). It is not surprising that Cather sought out Clayton (Dick was dead by this time) or that she was able to find him 13 years after the Wetherill ranch was sold. The Wetherills' tourist business at Mesa Verde had made them famous. Their business actually started in 1887, the year before Cliff Palace's discovery, but picked up dramatically because of this new attraction (Wetherill 20). Throughout the 1890s, even after the Panic of 1893 and the subsequent depression, the Wetherills kept up a lively business guiding and boarding tourists (Smith 34). Al Wetherill later remembered that "between 1889 and 1901 nearly one thousand people visited the ranch to see the cliff dwellings" (Wetherill 181). Although we can never know precisely what Clayton Wetherill told Cather about the discovery, his story likely matched the story provided by others in the Wetherill family, including his brother Al, who wrote an autobiography that focuses on the family's relationship to the cliff dwellings. The Wetherills generally worked as a team (Smith 18–19). In 1914, the year before Cather's visit, brother-in-law Charles Mason wrote an account of the family's discoveries and excavations, and the brothers all signed it in agreement (Harrell 49).

Essentially, the Wetherill discovery was firmly grounded in the speculative fever that was so much a part of Westerners' lives in general. Al Wetherill, who may have been a little resentful that his father, B. K. Wetherill, constantly uprooted the family in his search for riches, describes him as a typical speculator: "one of the early seekers for the fulfillment of daydreams and air-castles" (31). B. K. Wetherill's search for "air-castles" led him to borrow money to "finance a gold-gathering expedition" (22). His search also led to lead and zinc mines, ranching and farming, and finally to Cliff Palace (42). To B. K. Wetherill and his sons, the discovery of the ruins must have seemed like the big strike. As Duane Smith explains, the initial exploration of Cliff Palace was infused with the emotional drama of a gold rush (22). When Dick Wetherill and Charles Mason (whom Cather refers to as a "cow man" in her article) started back to Alamo Ranch after their discovery,

> they reached the camp of several friends, [and] they excitedly told of their discoveries in the canyons. Catching the fever, the whole group, joined by John Wetherill, set out on foot, with

> packs, to collect artifacts. Success rewarded their dig; John later wrote that they dug for about 30 days and took out a fine collection, which they carried back to the Alamo Ranch. (22)

The Wetherills viewed the cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde as "holy ground," to use Al Wetherill's description (116), but their sense of the sacred was defined by their experience as speculators. Therefore, as Al remembers, digging pots was like "hunting gold," only "much more exciting . . . because we never knew what we might find next" (119). When the Wetherills discovered that miners were extracting pots from the canyon in competition with their own excavations, the family offered to grubstake them. Al recalls, "we made an arrangement with them to go it on a larger scale, since we had the necessary equipment of tools and, the most important, horsepower. We grubstaked them and we were to see to getting the stuff [artifacts] out of the cañons" (124). Al distances himself from these miners because they lacked the right attitude toward the pots; he writes, "to them, all was just so much stuff to get out to market" (125), but he and his family invested in their work nonetheless. Al's self-congratulatory attitude toward his own family's high-mindedness over the ruins becomes tenuous, though, when he describes their first exploration of Cliff Palace: "It is as though unseen eyes watched, wondering what aliens were invading their sanctuaries and why" (111). Al asserts that one must approach the mesa with "the proper spirit of romance" (114) in order to "bring back to life" the original inhabitants, but his sense that the spirits of the cliff dwellers question his and his brothers' motives for invading the ruins betrays his own uneasy awareness of their mixed motives—that they sought to resurrect an important part of the cultural heritage yet commodify this heritage to win "fame and fortune" (130). Cather would later build this same uneasiness into Tom Outland's recognition of the "mixed" (251) motives that characterized his early adventure at Blue Mesa.[13]

Cather thus launders Dick Wetherill's story when she depicts it as a departure from the routine of work; she knew that serving tourists was the focus of the Wetherills' work long before their discovery of Cliff Palace. Her erasure of speculation from the Wetherills' Mesa Verde experience reveals both her idealized conception of landscape and the very force that shaped this ideal. John Urry explains that the tourist's gaze is "constructed through difference":

> The gaze in any historical period is constructed in relationship to its opposite, to non-tourist forms of social experience and consciousness. What makes a particular tourist gaze depends upon what it is contrasted with; what the forms of non-tourist experience happen to be. (1-2)

Cather reworks economic-driven expansion into its most innocuous form, reverent tourism, but speculation defines the tourist experience through contrast. Wetherill, ostensibly the "first white man" to explore Cliff Palace, arrives not to market it but to worship it, but his identity as an entrepreneur determines his form of worship.

Cather had already defined what she felt were the destructive effects of the speculator's gaze in "El Dorado: A Kansas Recessional," an early story that bears the unmistakable impress of populist rhetoric. The tale focuses on Apollo Gump, a land speculator and storyteller who lures Colonel Josiah Bywaters and others into buying land in an arid and isolated section of the Kansas prairie. Gump "told a good story so that it lost nothing in the telling," and his stories focus on "the fortunes made every day in Western real estate" (*Collected Short Fiction* 296). Although the Colonel "had his own scruples about land speculation"—specifically, "it seemed to him a good deal like gambling" (299)—he allows Gump to counsel him in its fine art, quick turnover rather than development: "Now, Colonel, you are buying this land to sell. . . . You don't want to bother with crops" (299). Like the other men enticed to this desolate section of the prairie, Bywaters falls into the trap. He speculates on the expectation that land values will increase when future settlers find their way to what has been billed as "El Dorado, the Queen City of the Plains, the Metropolis of Western Kansas, the coming Commercial Center of the West" (294). Of course, Bywaters and the other townsfolk have been swindled by Apollo Gump and Gump's brothers because no one shows up to buy the land. When the rest of the people abandon the town, Bywaters remains on the land because of his inability to desert his agrarian belief that land is inherently valuable, that the money he invested in his land "could not absolutely vanish" (295). What most troubles him is the townspeople's wholly commercial relation to the land. He recognizes that no one cares for the soil, but "every one wanted to speculate in it" (303). Colonel Bywaters's reflections on speculation give voice to Cather's populist anxieties. Specifically, he relates the Panic that destroyed the tiny town of El Dorado to the larger problem of land development in the West. Bywaters considers

> whether some day the whole grand delusion would not pass away, and this great West, with its cities built on borrowed capital, its business done on credit, its temporary homes, its drifting, restless population, become panic-stricken and disappear, vanish utterly and completely, as a bubble that bursts, as a dream that is done. (303)

According to populists, speculators such as Gump were destroying the economic stability and moral fabric of the nation.

Perhaps Cather absorbed the populists' antispeculative rhetoric so readily because she had grown up in a "temporary" home in Red Cloud because of speculation. As Mildred R. Bennett points out, Cather's father, Charles F. Cather, "claimed it was better business for him to rent [a house] and loan money than to buy or build" (20). Cather expressed her own often-noted sense of rootlessness[14] in her depiction of El Dorado's "drifting, restless population." Furthermore, "El Dorado" demonstrates that early on Cather viewed speculation as the source of this dislocation, a dislocation that also distinguished the Wetherills and later characters such as Tom Outland, whose parents—described as "mover people"—died as they "cross[ed] southern Kansas in a prairie schooner" (*Professor's House* 115). Cather's family had been lured out to the Nebraska prairie in part by the prospect of large tracts of inexpensive farm land (Woodress 33), but in 1885 Cather's father sold off his farm equipment, moved the family from their farm into the town of Red Cloud, and opened "an office to sell real estate, insurance, and to make farm loans" (43). He made a clear choice between the agrarian ideal—to invest money in the land and make it more productive—and speculation. Although he gave up farming, he held onto his large farm and continued to buy more land in Webster County (Brown and Edel 25), borrowing money to pay for it, as most others did. Mortgaged property served as collateral for loans to buy more land, but this strategy must have seemed a safe bet at the time. Cather opened his real estate office in the midst of "the great Western land boom," a period of "intense speculation in the appreciation of land values" (Randall 7). These were also the peak years of European immigration to Nebraska. The immigrants who continued to move into the Red Cloud area provided a seemingly steady market for land.

And Red Cloud served as a division point for the Republican Valley Railroad. Eight passenger trains ran through town daily, encouraging settlement in the area (Bennet 43).

Red Cloud, Nebraska, was not El Dorado, Kansas, but like Colonel Bywaters, the Cathers experienced both the heady expectation and despair caused by speculation. The Cather family finances suffered in the Panic of 1893, caused in part by falling land values and the overmortgaging of farms (Randall 7). Charles F. Cather, "like most of his neighbors, had indulged in undue speculation and owned a great deal of heavily mortgaged land" (7) when the bottom fell out of the real estate market. As Brown and Edel explain, "A large farm that he had under cultivation was abandoned. A bank with which he had dealings failed. He was in desperate straits to keep the land and to meet the expenses of a large family" (65). When Willa Cather returned to Red Cloud after graduating from the University of Nebraska, the town was at the bottom of its depression, and she helped the family by working in her father's office, which "at this time had to do mainly with land-titles and mortgages" (71).

"El Dorado" suggests that Cather viewed speculation as the primary force driving a wedge between humans and land; she later promoted tourism to Mesa Verde as an antidote. Speculation destroys the land because no one is willing to develop it or build anything permanent on it. The speculator, concerned only with quick money, was responsible for creating the "hundreds of ugly little American towns" travelers passed through on their way to Mesa Verde from New York. Like El Dorado, these towns were not "harmonious with [their] site and setting" because they had been built by individuals who were new to the area and thus had no understanding of the particular landscape. Rather than living in a "dignified relation" to the land, rather than "interpreting" and "personalizing" the relation of the buildings to the land, as Cather writes of the cliff dwellers, speculators merely grafted the buildings onto the land haphazardly, so much so that these buildings could easily be carted off to new locations when the speculations failed. When the Gumps' scheme is exposed and the mortgages called in, "the loan agents and various other creditors literally put the town into wagons and carried it off" (303).

In her 1916 article Cather claims, though, that once tourists "reach the mesa, all that [ugliness] is behind [them]" (84). As she imagines it, tourism enables individuals to recover the original relation to the land before the speculators ruined it, to undo the commodifying effects of speculation. Dick Wetherill's tourist gaze thus initiates a ritual that would help to heal modern society's estrangement from the land and from the values of the past. The tourists who would follow Cather's advice to visit Mesa Verde and see through Wetherill's eyes would engage in a collective act; like the cliff dwellers' participation in ritual, generation after generation of tourists would go on "gravely and reverently repeating the past," reverencing through repetition the meaning inherent in the lives of the cliff dwellers as it had been validated by Dick Wetherill's vision. Cather here participates in the development of tourism as a modern form of ritual. As Dean MacCannell explains, sightseeing "is a kind of collective striving for a transcendence of the modern totality, a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of incorporating its fragments into unified experience" (13). The ritual enacted through tourism, furthermore, functions to ratify the tourist attraction as an object of "ultimate value" and thus functions to create a coherent sense of value within the larger culture (14). The meaning that Dick Wetherill "models" for Cather's readers would, as MacCannell explains of tourist rituals in general, "add to the ballast of our modern civilization by sanctifying an *original* as being a model worthy of copy or an important milestone in our development" (26). Later tourists to Mesa Verde would reaffirm the value Wetherill recognized in the ruins, and this collective reaffirmation would form a solid moral center in what Cather perceived as the empty bubble of modern society. Indeed, Cather concludes her Mesa Verde article by emphasizing the instability of modern life, insisting that a deeper reality lay in the cliff dwellers' culture, and claiming that tourists now would be able to recognize the difference. Through tourism, Cather says, "you begin to feel that custom, ritual, integrity of tradition have a reality that goes deeper than the bustling business of the world" (86).

As the "first white man" to see the ruins, Dick Wetherill initiates this ritual, but we also need to keep in mind that for Cather the significance of the cliff dwellings originates in his gaze: the cliff dwellings do not become real or authentic until he sees them. Cather's focus on Wetherill's "entrada" reflects a generalized perception that the significance of the West somehow begins when it is explored and settled by whites. This notion is reflected in Freeman Tilden's proposal that national parks should "preserve, in a condition as unaltered as humanly possible, the wilderness that greeted the eyes of the first white men who challenged and conquered it" (qtd. in Neumann 196). Moreover, Cather's focus on Wetherill's "discovery" suggests that sights like Mesa Verde assume authenticity in the modern mind only as they are validated and duplicated.[15] Mesa Verde becomes "real" only after Wetherill sees it and distributes its story. In adding her story to the reproductions available in park brochures and published advertisements, Cather helps to reaffirm the sight's/site's authenticity.

In fact, the need for a Mesa Verde story was particularly acute. Preserving a site for its cultural and historic meaning was new to most Americans, and Cather's article served as a guidebook to assign meaning to the ruins. Like the Wetherills and Dr. Fewkes, Cather interprets the Mesa Verde story as an essential part of our cultural heritage. Yet her determined efforts to fix "what the Mesa Verde means" for potential tourists suggest that on some level she recognized the existence of other stories. According to Cather, the park "is not, as many people think, an inconveniently situated museum. It is the story of an early race, of the social and religious life of a people indigenous to that soil and to its rocky splendors" (85–86). In other words, Mesa Verde is not a place where tourists admire the ruins from an aesthetic distance; rather, here they insert themselves into the story and relive it. In doing so they become "indigenous to that soil," able to overcome the same alienation from the landscape that led to the construction of the temporary towns springing up across the continent. For Cather, then, like the station agent, hotel people, camp outfitters, and guides such as Oddie Jeep and the Wetherills—everyone who had an economic stake in tourism—the story becomes all-important. But as Cather tries to cement sight and signifier, she reveals the instability—indeed the very interchangeability—of this relation.[16] For tourists tend to see what they have been told to see. In certain ways, then, Cather's Mesa Verde article is undistinguishable from Apollo Gump's El Dorado stories and the stories generated by the pioneering Wetherills, who advertised the ruins in 1895 in the Colorado Springs *Gazette* as the "homes of an extinct race, the oldest and most wonderful ruins in America" (Wetherill 180). All of these stories supposedly uncover the "true" value of the land, and all lure individuals to a new area to spend their money.

On some level Cather must have known that in suppressing the marketplace transactions that were an integral part of the Mesa Verde experience, and thus helping to sell Mesa Verde, she was complicit in the bustling business of tourism. But she believed that her story, the Mesa Verde experience itself, could rehabilitate the language and paradigms of Western expansion. We see this most clearly in her focus on the discovery of Cliff Palace by Dick Wetherill, a scene so integral to the meaning of Mesa Verde that she reworks it twice more in "Tom Outland's Story": when Outland first views Cliff City and again when he views its wholeness after Rodney Blake's departure. Cather plays with the facts in her portrayal of Wetherill's find. She writes that "until that time the mesa was entirely unexplored," but as David Harrell points out, Cather knew that by 1888, the year of Dick Wetherill's so-called discovery, the mesa had been "explored by several parties and individuals; artifacts had been removed; and the canyons and ruins had been surveyed, mapped, sketched, photographed, and described" (98). This information was available to Cather in park brochures (20). Furthermore, Cather undoubtedly was aware that it was widely debated as to who actually discovered Cliff Palace (93). There were many claimants, and even if we focus on those within the Wetherill family we find a complicated story. By 1888, the Wetherill brothers had thoroughly explored most of the ruins, but Al Wetherill was the first of the family actually to see Cliff Palace. That particular day, however, he was too tired to explore the ruins, so he informed his brothers of his discovery, and thereafter they went out actively looking for them (Smith 22). Al seems to have spent the rest of his life regretting that he had not followed up by exploring the ruins himself and thus secured his claim (Wetherill 110). Furthermore, when Dick Wetherill first caught sight of Cliff Palace, he was accompanied by his brother-in-law, Charles Mason. In her article Cather casually mentions that Wetherill "rode off with one of his cow men" (83) into the mesa. She leaves Mason nameless and seemingly reduces his status to hired hand (Harrell 49), so that the focus falls clearly on Wetherill. In simplifying a complex story, Cather asserts Wetherill's imaginative title to the ruins by making him the one who gets there first. In turn, she suggests, tourists—seeing what Wetherill had seen—can also gain imaginative possession.

But why is getting there first so important? Cather had been influenced by the emotional drama of speculation that was such an important part of Western thinking. The imaginative possession of landscape that for Cather marks the cliff dwellers and Dick Wetherill as superior arises from the intoxicating rush that accompanied taking economic possession of land. As Patricia Nelson Limerick explains, there were other ways (such as intention or need) to decide who actually owned a parcel of land, a mine, or other natural resource, but the principle of "first in time, first in right" gained widespread influence in "selecting among conflicting claims" (66). Thus, the "idea of getting there first" eventually took on an "almost mystical weight" in the West (66). Limerick points out that speculation invested priority with excitement:

> To take up a piece of undifferentiated land, assign it boundaries, and then watch it acquire value was one of the most exhilarating experiences available in the Western economy. This addictive and pleasurable experience came to be known as speculation; prosaic and monetary as it was, speculation still fit in the category "adventure," involving equal doses of risk, unpredictability, and imagined reward. (67)

Cather would have us envy Dick Wetherill's first sight of Cliff Palace because he was discovering a cultural treasure. At this stage of her life, she believed that she could transform this speculative model and sever it from economic taint. But most Westerners—including the historical Dick Wetherill, whose own rush energized him to dig up pots for 30 days—would recognize this as the excitement of staking a claim.[17]

Tom Outland and tourism

In *The Professor's House* Cather bases Tom Outland on her own younger, more idealistic self, who believed that she could disentangle reverence for the cliff dwellings from their economic value as a tourist commodity.[18] Yet she distances herself from Outland and renounces the idealism of her 1916 article.[19] *The Professor's House* dwells instead on the failure of sightseeing as a ritual to purify modern life, for Cather emphasizes in her novel that this supposed escape from modern American enterprise is controlled by speculation. This reading contradicts the conventional view of Tom Outland as Cather's idealistic surrogate. As David Harrell notes, critics have been "profuse with their praise of Tom Outland" (185).[20] There are skeptics, however. Susan J. Rosowski, for example, notes what she calls "a troubling undercurrent of human values betrayed" (133) throughout Tom's story. She finds Tom's excavations on the mesa particularly problematic: "Outland appreciated the beauty and dignity of Cliff

City; at the same time, he was a modern version of the 'brutal invaders' who ravaged the ancient tribe." Like Rosowski, Matthias Schubnell argues that "Outland is not a timeless, mystical hero" (105). According to Schubnell, readers need to recognize that Outland is "the product of his time and culture, destined to make decisions and to take actions that can only be explained by the historical matrix into which he was born." Schubnell specifies that "as the child of 'mover people,' adopted by a railroad engineer who himself moves from place to place, Tom grows up in an age of mobility and expansion." I would add that what complicates Tom's character is his complicity in the economic forces driving expansion; the brutal invasion that Rosowski detects in Outland's actions on the mesa develops out of his speculative instinct—an integral part of Dick Wetherill's, Tom Outland's, and Cather's historical matrix that critics have not yet fully explored. Like the Wetherills' "invasion" of Cliff Palace, Tom unwittingly carries into the ruins both the "spirit of romance" and the values of the business world.

Like so many of Cather's characters, then, Tom Outland is a composite, in this case formed from Cather's youthful idealism and from a generalized sketch of Dick Wetherill and his family, who gazed reverently at the cliff dwellings but whose ultimate standard of value was economic.[21] This point enables us to understand why Tom and Rodney Blake, having spent so much time together and having formed a "happy family," finally fall out over a misunderstanding as to the true "value" of the cliff dwellings (*Professor's House* 198, 245). When Tom discovers that Rodney has sold the artifacts while he was away in Washington, D.C., trying to sell the idea of the ruins to Smithsonian officials, Tom tells Rodney "that such a thing as selling them had never entered my head," yet he realizes that Rodney "thought I was lying" (242). Tom goes on to explain why he had not talked about his feelings toward the mesa: "it was the kind of thing one doesn't talk about directly" (239). But Tom and Rodney had discussed the cliff dwellings. In fact, Tom remembers that when he returned to camp after his first sight of the ruins, "we talked and speculated until after midnight" (203). Tom thus sets up the fiction that he and Rodney speculate in different ways. He portrays Rodney as an economic speculator whose actions sully the purity of the mesa while he himself deals solely in an imaginative form of speculation. But the self-deception of Tom's position drives a wedge between the two men. Like the Wetherills, Tom may be high-minded, but Rodney accurately perceives that Tom's language and actions cannot easily be distinguished from his own.

Tom begins his story with the "accident" through which he first meets Rodney Blake: "It began with a poker game" (179). Rodney cleans everyone out in a high-stakes game in which players must buy $100 worth of chips (180). High stakes, high risk, and high drama, gambling was speculation in its most basic form. Cather had made this connection in "El Dorado," when she explains that to the Colonel, land speculation "seemed . . . a good deal like gambling." Although Tom deplores that other so-called friends have double-crossed Rodney, have in effect set him up, Tom does the same here. It is not by chance that Tom introduces Rodney as a gambler; rather, it constitutes another example of the cultural frame-ups, the plots used to "[incriminate] the innocent," that Jean Schwind asserts are at the core of *The Professor's House* (72). Rodney, the defender of the wrongfully accused Alfred Dreyfus, is himself victimized. Tom ostensibly defends Rodney by explaining that he was "not trained by success to a sort of systematic selfishness" (185), but he also depicts Rodney as fully immersed in the game of speculation. Tom sympathizes with Rodney because his friends in Old Mexico had "skinned him" by investing all of his "savings into an oil well," but Tom's inclusion of this fact again betrays Rodney by calling attention to his economic speculation.

Tom works beside Rodney in extracting the pots, but he criticizes him for not having the right attitude toward them. Like early explorers and miners in the Mancos Valley, Rodney's relationship to the cliff dwellings is based unabashedly upon an extraction economy; he digs up artifacts in order to sell them, viewing them as just like "anything else a fellow might run on to: a gold mine or a pocket of turquoise" (245). Rodney assumes a business risk to excavate the ruins. He invests his labor and his earnings from the Sitwell Cattle Ranch because he expects "big figures" (241) in return. As Rodney later explains to Tom, he "meant to 'realize'" on the ruins, just as he thought Tom meant to, because "it would come to money in the end. 'Everything does'" (244). When "Uncle Sam" doesn't come through with the big reward for the discovery that both Rodney and Tom had hoped for, Rodney sells the artifacts to the German Fechtig for $4,000 (238). Rodney explains his decision in terms of the luck that was such an important part of speculation: "It was a chance in a million, boy. . . . There's only one man in thousands that wants to buy relics and pay real money for them" (241). Like Al Wetherill, who condemned the miners his family grubstaked for viewing the pots as "just so much stuff to get out to market," Tom refuses to recognize his own complicity in what he sees as Rodney's form of speculation. In fact, after their quarrel, Rodney believes that Tom has merely been grubstaking his work. He tells Tom, "I see now I was working for you like a hired man, and while you were away I sold your property" (245). As David Harrell observes, "Outland's indignation . . . belie[s] all of his assumptions—that they were partners in the enterprise, that they both had hoped and expected to 'realize' something out of it" (128). Tom quarrels with Rodney, destroying what is left of his "happy family" after the death of Henry Atkins, in order to deny his relatedness to economic speculation.

Tom emphasizes Rodney's speculation in order to set off his own imaginative speculation, an ideal form that supposedly allows him to value truly the "world above the world" that is Blue Mesa and thus to rise above the corrupt values of the speculator. Tom calls attention to his ideal speculation at two points in his narrative: when he discovers the cliff dwellings and later when he "first" sees them "as a whole" (250) after the artifacts have been removed and Rodney has departed. As other readers have noted, Tom's discovery of the ruins mirrors Dick Wetherill's as Cather had depicted it in her 1916 article (Rosowski and Slote 86–92, Harrell 98). Like Wetherill's, Tom's discovery represents a "departure" from his everyday routine of cattle herding. And like Wetherill, Tom sees the ruins "through a veil of lightly falling snow" and realizes that they have been "preserved in the dry air and almost perpetual sunlight like a fly in amber" (201, 202). Cather thus reenacts Dick Wetherill's tourist gaze three times: once in her 1916 article and twice in "Tom Outland's Story." However, the repetition of the tourist gaze in this case does not ratify the authenticity of her earlier depiction of Wetherill's sighting. Rather, Tom repeats the tourist gaze because—as he finally realizes—his initial gaze at the cliff dwellings had not represented speculation in its pure form but had been infected by economics.

Tom's initial confrontation with the cliff dwellings, like Dick Wetherill's, teasingly combines aspects of the idealized tourist and the speculator. Cather prepares Tom for this experience in much the same way that she had prepared the town of Mancos. Although Mancos had actively marketed itself as the gateway to the ruins, Cather cleansed the town and its members of the taint of "modern" commercialism. Similarly, Tom undergoes purification before he confronts the ruins. This makes little sense to Tom, but as soon as he immerses himself in the Cruzados River and crosses to the other side, he feels that "I had never breathed in anything that tasted so pure as the air in that valley. It made my mouth and nostrils smart like charged water, seemed to go to my head a little and produce a kind of exaltation" (200). Tom's emphasis on the purity of the mesa leads readers such as David Harrell to interpret this experience as a form of baptism (108). In this sense, Tom implies that he, like the cliff dwellers he identifies with, is "purifying life by religious ceremonies and observances" (*Professor's House* 220). We could also say, though, that Tom's intoxication reflects the adrenaline rush experienced by speculators, or, as Tom puts it, "the excitement of my first discovery" (251). After all, Tom's exploration of the mesa was spurred by the priority integral to speculation; quite simply, he and Rodney had long wanted to "be the first men up there" (187).

Like the Wetherills before him, Tom views the ruins as "holy ground" even as he approaches them as a prospector, and his language throughout his story carries what Cather now recognized as a problematic duality that was impossible to dispel. Tom thus explains that the ruins inspire reverence; when he and Rodney first explore the cliff dwellings, he describes how "we went about softly, tried not to disturb anything—even the silence" (208). Yet as soon as their stint for the Sitwell Cattle Ranch is finished, Tom and Rodney pack food, "an ax and spade" (207) and head off into the canyon to begin "what we called excavating" (211). Tom's obvious discomfort with the word "excavating" reveals Cather's second thoughts on the purity of Dick Wetherill's vision. Tom knows that he has no other terms available to describe their adventure on the mesa besides those shared by archaeologists and miners, and he realizes that the ax and spade clearly identify them with those who view the landscape as a commodity. Yet his use of "excavating" suggests that, like Cather's earlier attempts to rehabilitate the speculative model of discovery and its attendant excitement as aesthetic possession, Tom means to imply that their excavations are not economically motivated. But this problematic duality characterizes their adventure on the mesa as a whole. We see it, for example, when Tom keeps an "account" of each artifact they unearth in a "merchant's ledger" (212) and when Rodney "stakes" (224) Tom for his trip to Washington, D.C., with the money won in the high-stakes poker game. We see it, too, when Tom takes what he calls his "business" (225) to Washington in order to return to the mesa with men who will "appreciate it and dig out all its secrets" (224).

Tom's language identifies him with speculators, and his actions on the mesa follow the typical sequence for land speculation: survey and map the land, measure it, register it—and once it acquires value, sell it. In this way, Tom and Rodney's adventure is virtually indistinguishable from other speculators' adventures. When the reader first sees the canyons and caverns of Cliff City through Tom's eyes, the landscape has already been surveyed and measured, the first steps taken by land speculators who would then use the grid to divide the land into salable units. The speculator's gaze dominates when Tom describes the walls of the canyon as "anywhere from eight hundred to a thousand feet high, as we afterward found by measurement" (200). The cavern in which the cliff dwellings sit is "three hundred and sixty feet long, and seventy feet high in the centre" (204). Tom's trip to Washington to "register" their discovery and sell the Smithsonian on developing the site, and Rodney's sale of the artifacts in the meantime, complete the speculator's cycle. Washington housed not only the Smithsonian but also the General Land Office, the bureau "charged with confirming land patents sent in from the district offices" (Limerick 59). When Tom had to go through the "formalities of securing his patent" (259) on the Outland vacuum before rushing off to war, he probably visited Washington once again. For Tom and other speculators, Washington represents the external authority, the way to authenticate one's claim so that it can be sold.

What further complicates Tom's position as model tourist is that like Dick Wetherill and Cather before him, he is not only a consumer of the tourist gaze but a supplier as well. Rodney sells the artifacts while Tom visits Washington on business to market and promote the development of their find. The problem lies in the fact that Tom needs "proper specialists" (222) from Washington not only to affirm the value of his discovery but also to help him understand precisely what he is selling. When Tom and Rodney reveal to Father Duchene their plan to send Tom to Washington, Duchene suggests that Tom petition the director of the Smithsonian Institution to send an archaeologist to "interpret all that is obscure to us" (222). Duchene believes that this specialist will "revive this civilization in a scholarly work," a necessary project because Cliff City will "[throw] light on some important points in the history of [the] country."

Tom is, then, a would-be "custodian" of our national heritage, a role also undertaken by the Wetherills when they petitioned the Smithsonian in 1890 to help excavate and protect the cliff dwellings, and by Cather in her Mesa Verde article. What Rodney derisively refers to as Tom's "Fourth of July talk" (245) sheds additional light on his plans for the ruins and further connects him with the idealistic but speculative Wetherills. When Tom proclaims that the ruins belong "to this country, to the State, and to all the people" (242), he reveals his vision of Cliff City as not only being revived in a scholarly work targeted at an elite readership but also as a tourist attraction, perhaps even a national park held in "trust" for all Americans (244). But Cather again dismisses Tom's attempt to achieve a pure perspective outside the realm of speculation. For Tom's patriotic talk echoes the speculative talk of the people of Tarpin, who also believe that "them ruins didn't belong to Blake any more than to anybody else" (237), and therefore they should have been cut in on the $4,000 deal with Fechtig.[22]

In her Mesa Verde article, Cather had constructed Dick Wetherill as a model for succeeding generations. His gaze ostensibly initiated a tourist ritual that would heal the alienation from the land that characterized modern life and instill a sense of authenticity. But "Tom Outland's Story" reverses the assumptions of the Mesa Verde article. Tom's gaze leads to experience dominated by notions of profit and loss and marked by his alienation from the land and from others. The first evidence that Tom finds of the cliff dwellers' civilization, their irrigation mains (193), identifies them with the agrarian life championed by populists. Tom explains that "there is something stirring about finding evidences of human labour and care in the soil of an empty country. It comes to you as a sort of message, makes you feel differently about the ground you walk over every day" (194). The cliff dwellers' "labour and care" are also reflected in their architecture. When Tom sees the village, he realizes "one thing we knew about these people; they hadn't built their town in a hurry. Everything proved their patience and deliberation" (212). Tom may feel differently about the ground he walks on, but this experience cannot rehabilitate the speculative paradigm that pervaded Western life. Tom admires Blue Mesa, but he builds an "El Dorado." Rather than modeling his life on the cliff dwellers' agrarian civilization, he prospects. Rather than deliberately personalizing his relation to the mesa, he quickly brings in tools and workmen from Tarpin to construct his own cabin and build roads to facilitate excavation (210). Not only does Tom's construction resemble that of miners who needed easy access to precious metals or coal but the hurried building that takes place on the mesa also reflects Tom's and Rodney's concern with their investment. As Tom explains, rebuilding a road that had been destroyed by a landslide "cost us three weeks' hard work, and most of our winter's wages" (210). And the log cabin built by men who were new to the mesa is not "harmonious with its site and setting," nor would it be built to endure for centuries, as the cliff dwellings had been. Tom experiences the organicism of the cliff dwellings, but his response recalls what Cather abhorred: the "ugly little American towns" that had been created by speculators.

Tom concludes his narrative with an important admission that betrays Cather's recognition of the naïveté of her earlier portrayal of Dick Wetherill. For Tom concedes that his motives had been "mixed" in relation to the ruins, that his "adventure" in Cliff City resembles the adventures of speculators all over the West. He achieves this self-consciousness and experiences what he now feels is the true value of the mesa after Rodney has left and ostensibly freed him from "Rodney's" form of speculation and from the artifacts and their market value:

> In a sense, that was the first night I was ever really on the mesa at all—the first night that all of me was there. This was the first time I ever saw it as a whole. It all came together in my understanding. . . . Something had happened in me that made it possible for me to co-ordinate and simplify, and that process, going on in my mind, brought with it great happiness. It was possession. The excitement of my first discovery was a very pale feeling compared to this one. For me the mesa was no longer an adventure, but a religious emotion. I had read of filial piety in the Latin poets, and I knew that was what I felt for this place. It had formerly been mixed up with other motives; but now that they were gone, I had my happiness unalloyed. (250–51)

At this moment, Tom seemingly severs himself from economic speculation. He sets up a series of oppositions—between his "first discovery" and the present one, between intoxicating adventure and religious emotion, and between mixed motives and pure ones—in order to suggest that his new vision of the mesa is altogether different, has been untainted by marketplace transactions. He erases his complicity in the stripping and selling of the mesa by claiming that this was the first night he was "ever really on the mesa." Like other heroes and heroines in Cather's fiction, Tom ostensibly possesses the landscape "imaginatively and emotionally rather than economically" (O'Brien 61) and in turn is possessed by it.

Yet Outland's religious experience of Mesa Verde—one constructed through difference and denial—ultimately replays the quintessential tourist experience as depicted in Cather's 1916 article. And as with Cather's earlier portrayal of Wetherill, Tom's form of worship remains indelibly shaped by his speculative gaze. We see this most clearly in his description of his sacred experience, which recycles the language of speculation. Like Wetherill, Tom insists upon the primacy of his discovery; he claims it was the "first time [he] ever saw it as a whole." Furthermore, even as Tom renders his gaze as "unalloyed," his description of the mesa at sunset echoes Rodney's assessment of the mesa's value as equivalent to "a gold mine or a pocket of turquoise." Tom recalls that "Cliff City lay in a gold haze," the sun cast a "copper glow," the "arc of sky . . . was silvery blue," and the stars sparkled "like crystals" (250). Tom's transcendent experience merely sublimates the speculator's standard of value. And Cather's description of Tom undercuts the belief in the possibility of a purely imaginative experience severed from marketplace transactions.

The failure of Tom's tourist ritual leaks into the other sections of *The Professor's House* as well. Cather structures the novel around sightseeing and speculation in order to link Tom's (and the Wetherills') frontier experience to the "new commercialism" that dominates modern life. For Tom himself has become a tourist attraction, resurrected as a cultural icon but also commodified by the entrepreneur Louie Marsellus. Louie and Rosamund build their Norwegian manor house, Outland (which Louie ironically claims is "very harmonious with its setting" [39]) in part as a tourist destination. Louie explains that the house will serve as a

> memorial to [Outland]. We are going to transfer his laboratory there . . . all the apparatus he worked with. We have a room for his library and pictures. When his brother scientists come to Hamilton to look him up, to get information about him, as they are doing now already, at Outland, they will find his books and instruments, all the sources of his inspiration. (42)

Louie "adores" Outland, but his vision of a tourist site that would properly capture Tom's identity is shaped by his speculative vision. If Mesa Verde *is* Cather's story, Tom Outland has been converted into Louie's Outland, a gaudy mansion and ritual site that depicts Tom as a pioneering scientist who, in "revolutionizing aviation" (40), expands the twentieth-century frontier. But Cather makes it clear that Louie's identity as an entrepreneur, rather than distancing him from Tom, actually unites the two men. Like the Wetherills, who invested in Mesa Verde, and like Tom and Rodney, who invested in Cliff City, Louie speculated heavily in developing the Outland vacuum. Cather echoes the language used to describe Tom and Rodney's excavations when she has St. Peter tell how Louie "took heavy chances" and invested "every cent [he] had, and all he could borrow" (138). And like his predecessors', Louie's motivations for building this tourist site mix idealism and commercialism. St. Peter condemns Louie's Outland venture, asserting that he has "convert[ed] [Tom's] very bones into a personal asset" (47), but this condemnation applies equally well to the Wetherills' and to Tom Outland's conversion of the cliff dwellers' bones into an asset.

The quarrel within the St. Peter family as to who actually "owns" and controls the "value" of the Tom Outland story continues Tom and Rodney's quarrel as to who owns Cliff City. If the Marselluses convert Tom into "dollars and cents" (132), then St. Peter feels he must restore Tom to his original condition before he had been commodified. And indeed, in a move that rivals Louie's construction of Outland, St. Peter attempts to revive Tom as part of the cultural heritage by publishing his Cliff City diary. Part of this project involves annotating the diary and writing an introduction: "To mean anything, it must be prefaced by a sketch of Outland, and some account of his later life and achievements" (171). St. Peter recognizes that others, including his own wife Lillian, would introduce Tom quite differently (172).[23] St. Peter's project, then, like Cather's 1916 article, represents an attempt to fix meaning—in this case, what Outland "means." Presumably, future readers of Tom's diary would view the cliff dwellings through Tom's gaze, a gaze that would restore a sense of organicism and authenticity to the modern world. Furthermore, after viewing the cliff dwellings through Tom's eyes, readers would make the journey to the mesa, just as Cather's article enticed readers to Mesa Verde, and just as St. Peter had accompanied Tom to Blue Mesa before the war. Readers and tourists to Cliff City alike would reaffirm the "value" of Tom's life and validate the authenticity of his original vision.[24] St. Peter needs to "introduce" Tom at this point in his life because the authenticity of his own vision of Tom depends on its distribution and validation by others.

Cather highlights the ambiguity of St. Peter's vision, though, by paralleling his tourist gaze with that of the Marselluses, whom St. Peter has refused to join on their French tour. Instead, St. Peter tours through Tom's diary, an idealized form of sightseeing that ostensibly opposes the crass commercialism of the Marselluses, who commodify France by seeing their travels as an opportunity to buy antiques cheaply for Outland. Their excursion is measured by the souvenirs they buy for St. Peter: Trouville means bright rubber swimming caps, Aix-les-Bains, a bathrobe (269). Their tour mocks the one St. Peter wishes he could have made with Tom:

> To this day St. Peter regretted that he had never got that vacation in Paris with Tom Outland. He had wanted to revisit certain spots with him: to go with him some autumn morning to the Luxembourg Gardens. . . . to stand with him before the monument to Delacroix and watch the sun gleam on the bronze figures. (260)

St. Peter wants to view the world through Tom's idealizing eyes, not the Marselluses' commodifying ones. With France now spoiled for him, he travels through Tom to the Southwest. And after spending two months working with Tom's Cliff City diary, St. Peter seemingly escapes the materialism of "The Family" and achieves the organicism of Tom's cliff dwellers. He relives his childhood, "the realest of his lives" (264), and becomes "a primitive" in the sense that "he was only interested in earth and woods and water" (265). As Cather had claimed of tourists who involved themselves in the story of Mesa Verde, St. Peter's sightseeing through Tom's diary makes him "indigenous to that soil."

However, like Cather and like Tom before him, St. Peter constructs his idealized tourist experience through denial. In order to unearth Tom as a cultural treasure, St. Peter must suppress the one aspect of Tom's life that fuels the St. Peter family dynamics: economics. St. Peter's introduction of Tom connects his vision at Cliff City to his later achievements, but what will he make of the fact that Tom's invention earned a great deal of money because he "had taken pains to protect it by patent" (40)?

St. Peter could say that Tom protected his scientific discovery because he had been unable to protect his first discovery from Rodney's speculation. Of course, Tom had casually remarked to others that he knew "there might be a fortune in [his vacuum]" (61). Although both are true, St. Peter insists that by dying young Tom managed to escape "the trap of worldly success" (260). As John Hilgart explains, St. Peter practices a "selective amnesia" (395) in his treatment of Tom as uninterested in financial gain. Furthermore, St. Peter, like Tom before him, denies his relatedness to others. Tom had severed his relationship with Rodney in order to obscure his own complicity in the commodification of Cliff City. Similarly, in order to recast Tom as an icon, St. Peter has to deny his own relation to those for whom Outland means "dollars and cents." As St. Peter seemingly achieves transcendence, he feels "indifferent" to his family and finally denies his relatedness altogether (267): "He seemed to know, among other things, that he was solitary and must always be so; he had never married, never been a father" (265).

Godfrey St. Peter concludes his meditation on the meaning of Tom Outland by asserting his desire to travel to the Southwest, "down into Outland's country" (270). If the Marselluses reimagine Outland in the vulgar materialist manner of the nouveau riche, St. Peter reimagines him as the guide to an idyllic landscape. In rhetoric that evokes the vision of the land used to justify expansion, St. Peter wants "to watch the sunrise break on sculptured peaks and impassable mountain passes—to look off at those long, rugged, untamed vistas dear to the American heart. Dear to all hearts, probably—at least, calling to all" (270). Gazing at the landscape through Tom's eyes, St. Peter rewrites the settlement of the West as an idealized tourist experience, a series of pilgrimages to places that had not yet suffered from commodification and that could revive for tourists an organic relationship to the land. St. Peter next poses a rhetorical question that specifically ties his vision to escape: "Else why had his grandfather's grandfather, who had tramped so many miles across Europe into Russia with the Grande Armée, come out to the Canadian wilderness to forget the chagrin of his Emperor's defeat?" (270). St. Peter is lured by the romance of tourism to escape the present, but he can only do so by suppressing the economic incentives that called the Wetherills, Apollo Gump, Colonel Bywaters, and the Cathers. Like Cather in her 1916 article, St. Peter reworks economic forces into their most seemingly innocuous form, reverent tourism. But Cather had learned that descriptions of the "long, rugged, untamed vistas" inspiring St. Peter were also the stuff of speculation schemes and tourist brochures.

When Cather sought in *The Professor's House* to validate her earlier vision of the discovery of Mesa Verde, she confronted the fact that tourism and the stories promoting it were shaped by the very speculative forces from which they ostensibly offered an escape. In the 1938 letter in which she described her intentions for "Tom Outland's Story," she acknowledged that she "followed the real story [of Dick Wetherill's discovery] very closely in Tom Outland's narrative" (*Cather on Writing* 32). Indeed, Tom Outland, like his prototype Dick Wetherill, embodies the wedding of entrepreneurial and idealistic impulses that marked white explorers' and settlers' attitude toward the land. The almost mystical power of speculation infuses Tom's adventure at Blue Mesa as well as his descriptions of it. As if challenging readers to recognize what she herself was loathe to—the pervasiveness and profound influence of this addictive force in American culture—Cather weaves many instances of speculation into her novel: Rodney speculates on oil and ancient artifacts; Augusta (like other members of her church) speculates heavily on the Kinkoo copper mine; Louie speculates on Tom's vacuum design and a new tourist destination. The commodification of landscape leads to the commodification of humans themselves. Outland the man has become Outland the property. As a ritual, tourism fails. That Cather's characters cannot free themselves from the drama of speculation reflects upon the way in which it had inscribed her own stories. Like the youthful Cather, St. Peter views tourism as an escape from a degrading commercialism. Indeed, Cather defined this as the primary function of art, boldly asserting, "What has art ever been but escape" (*Cather on Writing* 18). However, "Tom Outland's Story" demonstrates the impossibility of such an escape. Cather's revisions of the meaning of Mesa Verde thus urge us to read her statements about the separation of art from economics as reflecting a troubled desire rather than a certain belief, a desire that grew more intense in the face of the mixed motives that characterized the exploration and settlement of the Western frontier.

Notes

1. Although Edith Lewis asserts that Cather was not "'gathering material' as they say, for a story" (101), David Harrell persuasively argues that Cather's trip to the Southwest was "probably a deliberate research venture" (43).

2. The whole article is reprinted in Rosowski and Slote. This is the text I use here.

3. For more on tourism in *The Professor's House,* see Woidat.

4. As Rosowski and Slote note, Cather's "1916 essay is 'Tom Outland's Story' in embryo: it contains the essential themes, techniques, and even images of the later story—and indeed, of [*The Professor's House*]" (91). Rosowski and Slote thoroughly analyze the ways in which Cather drew from this article in her novel, recycling phrases as well as images.

5. My understanding of speculation and its relation to tourism is indebted to Eric Purchase's *Out of Nowhere.* I am also indebted to his careful reading and feedback. In addition I would like to thank Paul R. Petrie, Jim Martin, and the readers of *Twentieth-Century Literature* for their many helpful suggestions.

6. John H. Randall III cites the populist movement as one of the formative influences on Cather. See for example 6–12.

7. Hilgart also investigates Cather's response to the commodity culture that threatened American culture and art. In his insightful essay, he reads *The Professor's House* as

> an enactment and critique of the most formalist version of Cather's aesthetic; it pursues to an extreme the project of fixing meaning with aesthetic hermeticism in a failed attempt to counter the cultural flux that Cather associated with modern America. (388)

8. Visitor totals at Mesa Verde National Park are given in Smith 211.

9. In her preface to *The Best Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett,* Cather explained that

> the artist spends a lifetime in loving the things that haunt him, in having his mind "teased" by them, in trying to get these conceptions down on paper exactly as they are to him and not in conventional poses supposed to reveal their character. (*Cather on Writing* 51)

10. Reginald Dyck asserts that Cather's famous statement, "The world broke in two about 1920, and I belong to the former half," allowed her to "maintain a sense of innocence regarding what had taken place on the frontier" (26). Dyck

specifically examines *My Ántonia*, but his argument applies to Cather's portrayal of Dick Wetherill as well.

11. As Rosowski and Slote point out, "the contrasts of the essay—past versus present and 'a tempered, settled, ritualistic life' versus 'the bustling business of the world'—[become] the contrasts of [*The Professor's House*]" as well (88).

12. Harrell has identified the brother as Clayton Wetherill (46). Dick Wetherill was killed in 1910 (42).

13. Harrell attributes the similarities between "Tom Outland's Story" and Al Wetherill's autobiography to her interview with Clayton Wetherill in 1915 (48).

14. James Woodress (369) and Janis Stout (206), for example, both treat Cather's sense of rootlessness in depth. In addition, Joseph R. Urgo explores Cather's sense of homelessness and her "migratory consciousness" (5).

15. We can apply here what MacCannell says of a work of art as a tourist attraction: "The work becomes 'authentic' only after the first copy of it is produced" (48).

16. MacCannell notes that the interchangeability of sight and signifier is inherent to tourism (118): tourists "exchang[e] perception for mere recognition" (121).

17. As David Harrell points out, "the discovery episode" (86) was integral to Cather's literary imagination; she "used the scene in other stories before working it out to her satisfaction . . . in 'Tom Outland's Story'" (85). In "The Treasure of Far Island" (1902), for example, published a year after "El Dorado," Cather asserts that the island "belong[ed] to the two children who christened it Far Island, partially because they were the original discoverers and claimants, but more especially because they were of that favored race whom a New England sage called the true land-lords and sea-lords of the world" (*Collected Short Fiction* 265). Demaree Peck argues that "Cather modeled her claimants upon Emerson's poet landlord in order to put herself and her readers in possession of the continent by means that was not tainted by greed" (7). Like Emerson, Cather privileges an imaginative possession of the landscape over material ownership (7). But in this story Cather also recognizes the validity of the principle of "first in time, first in right"; after all, the island belongs to the children because they are the "original discoverers and claimants." Cather would, as Peck argues, "make the competition between a material ownership and an imaginative appropriation of nature the central dramatic conflict in such later novels as *The Professor's House*" (8). But I would add that Cather increasingly

came to recognize that material and imaginative possession were inextricably tied in a way that her readers have not yet realized.

18. Woodress notes the similarities between Cather and Tom Outland when he asserts, "whereas the professor reflects Cather's thoughts and feelings at the age of fifty-three, Tom Outland is her youthful other self" (375). Rosowski and Slote also argue that "Cather drew upon her own experience in creating Tom Outland" (86).

19. Harrell also senses that Cather distances herself from her characters (185).

20. David Stouck, for example, sees Tom as "selfless, completely unmotivated by personal ambitions" (107) and argues that "reading Tom's account of the mesa and the discovery of the Pueblo Indian villages is in part an escape into a pastoral world of innocence and youth" (102–03). Evelyn Helmick Hively also views Tom as innocent. She believes (like St. Peter) that Tom "dies young before the world can corrupt him" (121). Like Hively, Robert Alan McGill argues that Tom is spared being degraded by rampant materialism by dying young (69). Woodress calls Tom "that uncorruptible youth" (372), and James Maxfield asserts that Tom "most nearly embod[ies] . . . Cather's values" (84). I would agree with Harrell's assessment that "readers have sometimes had difficulty recognizing the shortcomings of Outland and St. Peter as human beings" (189). Harrell, then, focuses on Tom's faults as revealed through his relationship to Rodney Blake. He believes that Tom "crossed the line between devotion and obsession" (126). Jean Schwind finds the "silver-screen heroism" (83) that St. Peter perceives in Tom to be insupportable because Tom's rugged individualism estranges him from others (86). According to Schwind, Tom's estrangement represents "a denial of the human ties that distinguish civilization from 'mere brutality'" (86). Janis P. Stout also faults Tom for his intolerance (208).

21. Harrell also notes the Wetherills' "mercenary interest" in the cliff dwelling and their role as "faithful caretakers" (126), but he does not develop how fully their speculation was entwined with their caretaker role or how fully Tom Outland embodies this duality.

22. Harrell also describes the similarities between Tom's patriotic speech and the Tarpin community's materialism (192).

23. Urgo also analyzes the conflicting stories about Tom Outland (31–34), pointing out that St. Peter's "status as Oxford prize winner" (32) gives his version of Tom authority.

24. In fact, Cather neglects to include St. Peter's reaction to the cliff dwellings at Blue Mesa to imply that he would have seen precisely what Tom had wanted him to see.

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Aldous Huxley's Americanization of the *Brave New World* Typescript

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When Aldous Huxley revised the *Brave New World* typescript[1] between 27 May and 24 August 1931, he strove to Americanize his dystopia. His cleverest expedient was to ink in additional insults to Henry Ford, so that a novel that began as a satiric rendition of the future according to H. G. Wells grew increasingly anti-Fordian. With Ford as synonym and stand-in, each new uncomplimentary use of his name further condemned the World State for being America writ large. Mustapha Mond's jurisdiction forms part of an insanely rational society for which several of Huxley's finest holograph insertions blame America's archetypal technocrat.

In the choicest of emendations herein called Americanizations, Huxley writes a new paragraph of two short sentences:

> "Ford's in his flivver," murmured the D.H.C. "All's right with the world."

This paragraph becomes the last two of 15 lines on TS 49; the other 13 lines are typewritten and only lightly edited. Lives in the brave new world are "emotionally easy," Mustafa Mond boasts, because the interval "between desire and its consummation" (*BNW* 50) has been eliminated. Huxley added a fervent outburst from the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning to complete this vignette.[2]

Huxley's two-sentence autograph addition discredits its utterer, castigates Our Ford, and ridicules the brave new world. Despite the D.H.C.'s piety, all is not "right" in the World State. The opening pages of chapter 3 switch back and forth from Mond's impromptu history lesson to Lenina's conversation with Fanny Crowne about irregularities in Bernard Marx's sex life. The World Controller's speech to the D.H.C.'s new students about the splendors of the brave new world is undercut by Lenina's growing dissatisfaction with promiscuity and Bernard's penchant for solitude.

A travesty of religious sentiment, the lines about Our Ford resemble slogans such as "Everybody's happy now," one of many bromides brave new worlders use to reassure themselves that the World State is the perfect place. Given a bookless society of nonreaders, one doubts the Director knowingly makes a literary allusion. Nevertheless, Huxley reveals an embarrassing contradiction between Robert Browning's robust optimism and the new situation parodying it. Instead of God overseeing the universe from heaven, brave new worlders envision Our Ford superintending their affairs from his "flivver," a slang expression for a small, inexpensive automobile, hence a decline misrepresented as apotheosis.[3]

In Browning's closet drama *Pippa Passes* (1841), a young girl from the silk mills of Asolo hopes to improve everyone she encounters on her annual holiday. As she passes by singing "God's in his heaven— / All's right with the world!" (Browning 15), her words confound Sebald and Ottima, an adulterous couple who have just murdered the latter's dotard husband. Stung by remorse, they atone through double suicide. Pippa's song voices Browning's "basic view" of the universe: "under an omnipotent, benevolent God, all must, at least in a cosmic sense, be right with the world," Kenneth L. Knickerbocker contends (Browning xvi). Due to the influence that Pippa's songs have on several parties during her daylong release from Ottima's husband's silk mill, "All *is* a bit righter."

This sense of augmented rightness is absent from the brave new world because standards have been lowered. Proof sheets substitute "All's well with the world" (PS 50) for "All's right," which is quoted correctly in typescript. The brave new world trivializes Browning's conception of a totally responsible God. Indifferent to questions of rightness, this supposedly utopian society only seeks wellness, "the maintenance of wellbeing" as Mond later defines it (*BNW* 209)—effortless comfort without the bother of a metaphysics.

TS 49 is partly blank. It could be a retyped leaf that ends at midpage "to fit a pre-existent following page" (Wilson 31). But TS 48 has only six typewritten lines, and TS 50 just nine. Fairly clean leaves such as TS 48–50 probably replaced heavily revised leaves, the evidence of prior revision disappearing forever. Yet even in a three-page portion already so heavily reworked that Huxley presumably retyped it, TS 49 exhibits an inspired afterthought.

As the counterpoint in chapter 3 becomes increasingly complicated, ever-briefer excerpts from the Director's history lesson vie with snippets of Lenina's ongoing discussion with Fanny and of Henry Foster's attempts to rile Bernard Marx. The Director explains that "We have the World State, now. And Ford Day celebrations, and Community Sings" (TS 57).[4] Huxley wrote in a brand-new one-line paragraph: "'Ford, how I hate them!' Bernard Marx was thinking." His inner fury is directed against Foster and the Assistant Predestinator, whom he overhears discussing Lenina's "pneumatic" charms as if she were "so much meat" (*BNW* 62), but thanks to a nicely ambiguous autograph insertion, Bernard also seems to be railing against Ford Day and Community Sings, perhaps abjuring the World State.[5]

Flying above the brave new world in chapter 6, Bernard Marx and Lenina Crowne discuss the advisability of cultivating strong feelings. Brave new worlders, Bernard groans, are "Adults intellectually and during working hours" but "Infants where feeling and desire are concerned" (TS 88). For Lenina's reply, Huxley inked in a new one-line paragraph from which he canceled the last two words: "'Our Ford loved infants,' said Lenina." To accommodate this observation, Huxley jotted down a participial phrase, "Ignoring the interruption," as preface to Bernard's next comment (TS 88; *BNW* 109). Lenina's remark breaks Bernard's disquisition into two parts, creating the appearance of a conversation. But she seems not to realize how foolish her rejoinder sounds. Our Ford's parodically Christlike regard is for infantility, not infants.

An addition near the conclusion of the typescript is Huxley's second-best handwritten Americanization. Self-exiled to an abandoned lighthouse, John Savage is fond of "hitting himself with a whip of knotted cords" until "trickles of blood" run "from weal to weal" (*BNW* 292). Three Delta-Minus land workers in a passing lorry stare "open-mouthed" as they count his strokes up to 12. At the bottom of the typewritten page, Huxley inked in two short paragraphs to record their astonishment:

> "Ford!" whispered the driver. And his twins were of the same opinion.
>
> "Fordey" they said. (TS 236)

Due to this sighting, John is soon besieged by reporters and the Feely Corporation's movie cameras. The morning after sightseers lure him into an "orgy of atonement" (*BNW* 305), the Savage, disgusted with himself, commits suicide.

Mustapha Mond disappears from the novel 10 pages before the Delta-Minuses spy John; their awe reintroduces him. The oath swearing also connects the brave new world's foundation figure, Henry Ford, with John's suicide in the final paragraphs. In chapter 17, Mond and the Savage argue to a standoff: embracing Mond's technology-worshipping future and returning to the Savage's primitive past seem equally inadvisable. The final inked-in Americanization confirms the Savage's inability to survive in, much less overthrow, the world that Mond and his fellow Controllers administer.

The twins' colloquial-sounding oath "Fordey!" acknowledges Ford's continuing supremacy. Although the Delta-Minuses scarcely realize as much, *dey* can mean governor, ruler, pasha. Huxley had already Easternized "his fordship" (*BNW* 37) by rechristening Sir Alfred Mond, a powerful, prominent British industrialist, after a notorious seventeenth-century Turkish sultan. Mond's first name also alludes to Mustafa Kemel (Kemel Ataturk), president of Turkey since 1923. H. G. Wells preferred a disinterested scientific oligarchy such as the samurai in *A Modern Utopia* (1905); Lawrence yearned for the preindustrial theocracy that Don Ramon and Cipriano establish in Mexico in *The Plumed Serpent* (1926); but Huxley feared a worldwide dystopia governed by sophisticated Western dictators wielding greater power than an oriental despot.

Two of the four inked-in emendations just mentioned appear to be very late embellishments. Huxley uses the anti-Ford paragraphs on TS 49 and 236 to bracket his novel. Unlike some emendations, which have faded, both paragraphs are written in bright blue ink—the first on a page probably retyped late in the revision process, the second in the novel's final sequence, itself not part of Huxley's original plan. Paragraphs on TS 49 and 236 are finishing touches in the Americanization of the typescript.

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Few explicit references to Our Ford or America can be found in the first 27 pages of the *Brave New World* typescript. This suggests that the first chapter of the novel was completed before Huxley fused Henry Ford's America with H. G. Wells's worldwide Utopia as his novel's target. Once he did so, *Brave New World* became increasingly anti-Fordian: one definite and two possible references in chapter 1 increase to five in chapter 2; the count rises to 19 by the third chapter, where the D.H.C.'s allusion to Ford in his flivver is the ninth reference.

During the D.H.C.'s lecture in chapter 1, Ford is never mentioned by name. The unidentified narrator tries to guess the Director's age "in this year of stability, A.F. 632" (*BNW* 3), but these numbers and letters probably meant little to Huxley's first readers. Similarly, when Mr. Forster explains "the system of labeling" bottle babies—"a T for the males, a circle for the females" (*BNW* 13)—the connection between the male symbol and Ford's T-Model would not have been automatic.

An indirect yet unmistakable allusion to Ford occurs on TS 6. The "problem" of "staffing" the brave new world with "identical workers" will be solved, the unnamed narrator anticipates, by producing "Millions of identical twins": "The principles of mass production at last applied to biology." This may be the hint that Huxley took when he resolved to expand America's nefarious influence. Brave new worlders inhabit a factory-like society whose workers are mass produced in A.F. 632 more proficiently than Detroit turned out cars in the 1920s. Huxley reduced "principles" to "principle" (PS 7, *BNW* 7) to suggest that Ford lacked a full-fledged philosophy.

On the other hand, the brave new world's solution to its labor problem satirizes Wells as severely as Ford. In *Anticipations* (1901), Wells relied on "procreation" by those with "beautiful and strong bodies, clear and powerful minds," to populate the "future world-state" (167–68). But the brave new world has heeded Wells's subsequent prediction in *A Modern Utopia:* "There appears no limit to the invasion of life by the machine" (98). In the brave new world, machinery does the work of procreation. The workforce consists of machine-made products: "standard Gammas, unvarying Deltas, uniform Epsilons" (*BNW* 6).

Not until TS 27, the bottom half of a sheet whose top has been torn off, does Huxley refer directly to the brave new world's guiding light. The Director relates how sleep teaching was discovered "while Our Ford was still on earth" (*BNW* 25). The implied parallel between Ford's career and Christ's ministry reveals the technocrat's godlike importance for the first time. On TS 29, one learns further that the first documented instance of hypnopaedia "occurred only twenty-three years after Our Ford's first T-Model was put on the market," which begins to explain the significance of the letters "A.F." Divulging these crucial facts, the Director "made a sign of the T on his stomach and all the students followed suit" (*BNW* 27).[6] This absurd gesture confirms Ford's divine status, but the primacy of stomach over head and heart implies a faith premised on consumer satisfaction rather than spiritual fulfillment.

Much of the Americanization of the World State depends on Huxley's clever uses of Henry Ford's name. Prominent places and famous landmarks, such as Charing Cross Tower ("Charing-T Tower" [*BNW* 68]) and Big Ben ("Big Henry" [99]), have been renamed for Ford; the highest religious and temporal authority, Mustapha Mond, is addressed respectfully by Fordian titles, namely, "Our Ford" or "his fordship" (35, 37). In 306 pages, one counts at least 110 references to Ford and things Fordian.

In chapter 3, with a total of 19 allusions to Ford, they come in clusters—on pages 60, 62, and 63, for example. In chapter 5, which has no fewer than 21 references to Ford, eight occur on pages 91–92. Chapter 4, which makes only one reference to Ford, may have been written earlier, before chapters 3 and 5. When Bernard discusses with Lenina their trip to New Mexico, she asks if it will start from "the Charing-T Tower" (68).

After chapter 5, the number of references to Ford per chapter evens out: seven in both 6 and 7, four apiece in 9 and 10, five in 11 and 12, four in 13, seven in 15, eight in 16, and seven again in the final chapter. But there is only one reference to Ford in chapter 8 and just two in 17, a good indication that materials in these chapters belong to an early stage in the writing process. After no more than several weeks of composition, Huxley began to complicate his parody of Wells by stepping up the attack on Ford, peppering the typescript with short phrases to invoke the American industrialist as the World State's be-all and end-all. Although three of Huxley's first six chapters (1, 2, and 4) have a grand total of nine references to Ford and thus may antedate the decision to link Ford and Wells as coevils, the first third of *Brave New World* still makes no less than 56 such references, compared to 28 in the second third (chapters 7–11) and 26 in the final third (chapters 13–18).[7]

Huxley caricatured H. G. Wells and Sir Alfred Mond in the composite figure of Mustapha Mond because he considered both men proponents of antihumanistic rationalization—the reorganization of society on an allegedly more scientific, more efficient, more technological basis. Such a reorganization might reverse the economic slump that had crippled Europe since 1929, but Huxley feared it was more likely to reduce human beings to machines by destroying freedom and individuality. Instead of the utopia that Wells touted in fantasies such as *Men Like Gods* (1923), the rationalized future would resemble Joseph Lucas's magneto plant or Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), Sir Alfred Mond's industrial complex.

When Huxley visited Lucas's factory that made electrical equipment for cars at Acock's Green in Birmingham, he witnessed mass production on British soil. He had also toured Mond's Billingham plant for producing sodium and synthetic ammonia. Both visits are described in "Sight-Seeing in Alien Englands."[8] Huxley's premise is that factory and plant are foreign countries to middle-class English intellectuals such as himself. "Sight-Seeing" appeared in June 1931, when Huxley was in the throes of a massive reconsideration of the *Brave New World* typescript.

At the Lucas factory, Huxley saw

> forty or fifty girls sitting at a long table. In front of them an endless band slowly crawled along, carrying on its surface the constituent parts of an electrical machine. Each girl had her special function—to insert a rod, to tighten so many screws, to make fast certain wires. When the last girl had done her job, yet another magneto was ready to be fitted to yet another car. (74)

Girls were used because they could be paid less than skilled mechanics; each worker performed "one small and specialized task" without having to understand "how a magneto worked" (74).

This experience found its way into *Brave New World* as the "small factory of lighting-sets for helicopters" that John Savage tours in chapter 11. Mass-produced Gamma-Plus dwarfs are mass-producing helicopter lights:

> In the assemblying room, the dynamos were being put together by two sets of Gamma-Plus dwarfs. The two low worktables faced one another; between them crawled the conveyor with its load of separate parts; forty-seven blond heads were confronted by forty-seven brown ones. (*BNW* 188)

The factory's "Human Element Manager" boasts that the workers never cause trouble. Nevertheless, John, breaking away from Bernard, is heard "violently retching behind a clump of laurels" (189).

Huxley suddenly realized that he had mistaken the national scene for the international; he was creating a modern British dystopia instead of a universally frightening one in which Ford's factories were the prototype for Lucas's plant and Sir Alfred's conglomerate. "Fifteen racks" in the Social Predestination Room, conveyors covering "Two thousand one hundred and thirty-six metres in all" (*BNW* 11–12), connote Ford, not Lucas; but with so few specific references to Ford in chapters 1 and 2, the novel's opening, if not the earliest draft generally, failed to underline the devilish partnership Huxley foresaw between Wellsian utopian fantasizing on one hand and Ford's know-how, his managerial expertise, on the other.

Wells's ideal of a rationalized society run by scientifically trained bureaucrats and Ford's confidence in the organizational skills that produce a well-run factory went together as ends and means. To universalize his antiutopia, Huxley realized, was to Americanize it, to become blatantly anti-Fordian.[9] In satisfying most of Wells's criteria for a "modern utopia," the brave new world shows how such a phenomenon could turn out differently from Wells's predictions. "London will be the first Utopian city centre we shall see," Wells promised (*Modern Utopia* 238). Huxley's focal point is also London, but one Americanized by a dramatic rise from three anti-Ford references in chapter 1 to fifteen in chapter 3.

In *Point Counter Point* (1928), Huxley's spokesperson, Mark Rampion, condemns "Americanization" as the deification of "Machinery and Alfred Mond or Henry Ford . . . in the name of society, progress, and human happiness" (415–16). Initially, Huxley believed his archvillain in *Brave New World* could be a caricature of either Sir Alfred Mond or Henry Ford, hence the choice of the former's surname for the World Controller's. However, by the time Mustapha Mond enters the novel in chapter 3, he is hailed as "his fordship" (*BNW* 37), Henry Ford's disciple and successor—not "Alfred Mond or Henry Ford" but both. The current Resident Controller for Western Europe is named for a figure familiar to British readers, but the position he occupies relates to an American industrialist, known the world over, who had made businesses such as Sir Alfred's possible. Mond continues a parodic papal succession that makes the Ford factory and the Wellsian scientific utopia extensions of each other.[10]

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Perhaps *Brave New World* did not begin in the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre but in Malpais. TS 120–28, which provide material for chapter 8, are among the oldest surviving pages of the typescript. Unlike surrounding leaves, these pages—heavily edited, faded, some with frayed edges—were typed with a black ribbon, a telltale sign of antecedence. For most of the typescript, Huxley used purple ribbons of varying shades, the lighter or more faded the type, the older the page.[11] Between TS 120 and 128, Huxley recounts a visit from one of Linda's admirers (120–21) and dramatizes the beating she receives from the pueblo women (122–23). Linda tells her son stories about the "Other Place," the brave new world (125–26), and John is tormented by Indian boys (127).

The earliest draft of *Brave New World* may have started with these reservation scenes. TS 120–28 reveal that Nina, Huxley's original name for Linda, has been left behind by Bernard, not by Thomas, the D.H.C. She has had a son but remains an outcast because the Indian women object to her promiscuity. The canceled lower half of TS 122 is enclosed in a box with lines drawn through it; Nina's whine, "Oh, why did I ever think of going with Bernard?" remains legible.

One suspects that Bernard and his son John originally were to be reunited for insurrectionary purposes. Together, this duo of malcontents would disrupt the Wellsian world order. On TS A1, the rejected but saved version of TS 169 that follows TS 248 in the typescript, it is the morning after John's refusal to make an appearance at Bernard's party. John urges a despondent Bernard to reform, forsake soma, and "Play the man. Haven't you often said that you only wanted the opportunity? Well here it is. Take it." Bernard promises, "I'll do it." This could have been the start of a subversionary clique. On TS 169 (*BNW* 211), the version Huxley decided on after opting for a novel without a hero, a "deflated" Bernard is "bitterly" unhappy to have lost his prestige as the Savage's exhibitor.

Having settled on ignominious defeat for the Savage, Huxley struck a passage in which John hints at enlisting confederates. At the end of their debate, Mond recites a long list of human miseries banished from the brave new world (old age, impotence, syphilis, cancer) and John declares, "I claim them all" (*BNW* 283). Mond's succinct reply, "You're welcome," originally read: "You won't find many other claimants," to which

Huxley typed in and crossed out John's response: "That's where I believe you're wrong" (TS 230).

Americanizations of the typescript suggest that *Brave New World* was transformed from a fairly conventional antiutopia into an "amused, Pyrrhonic" aesthete's parody of one.[12] The original plan was to show heretics revolting against an insufferable Wellsian system, as happens in Zamyatin's *We*, where dissidents disturb the One State, a regimented society run with maximum efficiency by the Benefactor and a cadre of guardians.[13] Instead, Huxley tells a thoroughly ironic tale in which three malcontents—John Savage, Bernard Marx, and Helmholtz Watson—fail to dislodge Mustapha Mond, one of the World State's Controllers, or even to shake his confidence.

Initially, Huxley appears to have imagined *Brave New World* as a pro-Lawrencian tract; it would resemble Zamyatin's *We*, upend Wells's *Men Like Gods*, and corroborate Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent*. In Lawrence's utopia, Cipriano, an Oxford-educated Indian, helps Don Ramon Carrasco, a descendant of Spanish conquerors, transform Mexico into a pre-Christian society predicated on "the old blood-and-vertebrate consciousness" (455). Similarly, a noble savage from Lawrence's beloved American Southwest, spouting a preference for God, freedom, and poetry, was to pose a formidable challenge to the ascendancy of technology and material comfort in the brave new world's deceptively blissful society.

By the time Huxley penned the Savage's suicide, however, Lawrence's influence, waning steadily since his death, had faded almost completely. Lawrence's excessive admiration for America may have been the last straw. Doubtless, Lawrence was sincere in declaring that New Mexico had "liberated [him] from the present era of civilization, the great era of material and mechanical development" (*Phoenix* 42). But Huxley foresaw no such liberation. The more he reconsidered, the more ineffectual New Mexico seemed, an eminently ignorable appendage to the real America that Ford and his ilk not only epitomized but were exporting worldwide.

Lawrence believed in America's destiny, its salvationary mission to revivify civilization. He exhorted America to "pick up the life-thread where the mysterious Red race let it fall" (*Phoenix* 90).[14] In a world given over to industry and machines, Lawrence continued, America must reanimate "the spirit of her own dark, aboriginal continent"; only America could quicken life's "pulse" from where "the Red Indian, the Aztec, the Maya, the Inca left it off." To Huxley, pronouncements of this sort sounded more like madness than hubris.

Recalling Lawrence in New Mexico—on the fringe, that is, of an expanding industrial state indifferent to his appeals to its "aboriginal" past—Huxley predicted his former mentor's increasingly marginal significance as a social prophet. Whether John is in Malpais or Fordian London, he never fits in, much less sparks a general renewal. On the reservation, the Savage is resented as an anomaly; transported to London, he becomes a novelty, not the World State's redeemer but its latest curiosity.

Huxley resolved not to let New Mexico furnish a Lawrencian alternative to the Wellsian future; he condemned Wells's prescription and Lawrence's antidote. In Huxley's mind, the Savage metamorphosed from courageous crusader against the World State into a ruthless caricature of Lawrence's naive overconfidence in preindustrial cultures.[15] Through John, Lawrence is Americanized pejoratively, his so-called blood philosophy emanating from Santa Fe instead of Nottingham.[16] Besides decrying the onset of a worldwide Americanization along Fordian guidelines, Huxley ridiculed Lawrence's New Mexican primitivism as a particularly pointless variation; it was an Americanization as misguided as the brave new world's, only smaller, weaker, impossibly reactionary—a ludicrous counterstroke. Once Huxley added Ford to Wells, Malpais became an even wickeder parody of Lawrence's vital community. "Pulsing with the indefatigable movement of blood" (*BNW* 125), it seemed certain to be an anachronism by A.F. 632 if not already an absurd impossibility in 1932.

Declining to champion Lawrence dovetailed nicely with Huxley's determination to indict Ford as the primary villain behind both Wells and Sir Alfred Mond. Huxley made both madhouses in *Brave New World* fundamentally American. As he Americanized London and Lawrence, the former grew more Fordian while New Mexico became Lawrencian. Huxley damned two equally unacceptable alternatives, Fordian London and Lawrencian Malpais, as contrapuntal opposites, satiric versions of the same theme, namely, aberration—a choice, as Huxley later put it, between "lunacy" and "insanity" (Foreword viii).[17]

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Conceivably, TS 120 contains the first paragraph of the novel that Huxley originally planned to write:

> It was very hot. They had eaten a lot of tortillas and sweet corn. Nina said: "Come and lie down, Baby." They lay down together in the big bed. "Sing," he said. Nina sang. "Streptococo-Gee to Banbury T," and "Bye Baby Banting, soon you'll need decanting." And then he went to sleep. There was a loud noise and he woke up with a start. A man was standing by the bed . . .

In the typescript, the first five lines (up to "he woke up") plus three words in line six ("with a start") have been boxed in and crossed out.

Done with purple ribbon and essentially free of emendations, TS 119 stops three quarters of the way down the page once it has overlapped the lines crossed out on the much older TS 120. Bernard asks John to tell him all about his life "as far back as you can remember," and the Savage recalls that

> It was very hot. They had eaten a lot of tortillas and sweet corn. Linda said, "Come and lie down, Baby." They lay down together in the big bed. "Sing," and Linda sang. Sang "Streptocock Gee to Banbury-T" and "Bye, Baby Banting, soon you'll need decanting." Her voice got fainter and fainter . . .
>
> There was a loud noise and he woke up with a start.

"Baby" is a survival of John's original name throughout TS 120–28 when these pages may have begun the novel.[18]

Admittedly, the first seven paragraphs of chapter 8 appear on both TS 119 and TS 120. But they give the impression of a bridge devised to connect the reservation scenes to preceding material actually written later. When Huxley no longer wanted to begin with Malpais, he needed a frame for John's recollections: he transformed them from the novel's opening episode into a story within a story, a flashback that contains some of the novel's earliest events. If one ignores the first seven paragraphs, chapter 8 reverts to a straightforward narrative of formative developments in the Savage's life from infancy through age "sixteen" (*BNW* 160). The story of the Savage's early years is told from John's perspective in the third person by an unnamed omniscient narrator whose comments can also be heard throughout the rest of the novel.

Huxley did not tour Mexico until 1934; he did not visit the American Southwest around Taos until 1937. For chapter 7 in the typescript, he relied on *The Plumed Serpent* and Lawrence's essays in *Mornings in Mexico* (1927). Bernard and Lenina witness a mixture of Zuni and Hopi rituals that provide a contrapuntal variation on the Solidarity Service Bernard attends in chapter 6. As parodies of each other, Malpais and the brave new world exhibit variant forms of barbaric behavior. John's recollections, the bulk of chapter 8, make sense with or without Bernard's request for them. As John begins to remember, the narrative moves inside his mind; thanks to indirect discourse, the Savage does not speak his reverie aloud to Bernard.

Instead of reuniting Nina's son John with Bernard, his father, Huxley made John the D.H.C.'s son. Instead of providing a confrontation between a son and a father who is also potentially a confederate, Bernard facilitates John's translation to Fordian London, where he and Linda discombobulate the D.H.C. His threats to exile Bernard (chapter 6) may be another late addition,[19] Huxley's way of motivating Bernard's interest in John once the latter was no longer his progeny. The Savage gives Bernard an opportunity to take revenge on his boss and avoid being sent to Iceland. However, after John has called the D.H.C. "My Father" (*BNW* 178), he forgets him entirely, spending the rest of his days in the brave new world under Bernard's tutelage, a carryover from their previous connection as father and son.

Bernard Marx requests John Savage's life story in order to "reconstruct" the past. He and John, Bernard points out, have been "living on different planets in different centuries" (*BNW* 144). The request sounds reasonable. If they are father and son, Bernard wants to narrow the distance between them; or else he hopes to reconcile opposites—the pueblo and the World State, "a mother, . . . dirt, and gods, and old age, and disease with bottle babies and perfect health until sixty." But Linda's pregnancy remains difficult to explain. She does not have a child as a direct consequence of getting lost and being abandoned on the reservation; she must have been pregnant before the catastrophe and despite having taken the usual precautions. "I still don't know how it happened, seeing that I did all the Malthusian drill," she complains to Bernard and Lenina (*BNW* 139–40). Linda's protestations smooth over a rough spot in Huxley's plot: he needed a natural childbirth for which Linda's getting lost cannot fully account.

When Huxley pushed back the original opening, he inked in "Linda" over "Nina" throughout what became TS 120–28. Three overlooked instances were caught between typescript and proof. "Lenina" was reserved as the name for Bernard's companion and John's femme fatale. Huxley also altered the name of "the anxious-looking little girl" whom a howling small boy refuses "to join in the ordinary erotic play": "Lenina Crown" (no *e*) became "Polly Trotsky" (TS 34). Bernard's Lenina first appears toward the end of chapter 1, when Henry Foster greets her by first name in the Hatchery's Embryo Store (*BNW* 17), but she is not seen again until chapter 3, several paragraphs after the Polly Trotsky passage (37), by which time "Nina" presumably had been changed to "Linda."

Even in the printed version, Lenina and Nina-Linda remain similar in more than name. Both are Betas. Linda informs Lenina that she worked in the Fertilizing Room, but she tells John that her "job was always with the embryos" (154), as is Lenina's. "Was our Linda originally the Savage's mother?" Wilson pondered (40). The D.H.C. recalls that the girl with whom he visited the reservation was "particularly pneumatic" (*BNW* 112). To make things less complicated, Huxley invented Bernard's contretemps with his boss, substituting the D.H.C.'s paternity for Bernard's and separating Bernard's Lenina from John's Nina by altering the latter's name to Linda. The scene in which the D.H.C. confides in Bernard about his disastrous excursion to the New Mexican reservation, during which he lost his Beta-Minus girlfriend, smacks of contrivance. "I really don't know why I bored you with this trivial anecdote," he concludes, "furious with himself for having given away a discreditable secret" (*BNW* 113).

The D.H.C. says he took his New Mexico trip "twenty-five" years ago, when he was Bernard's age (*BNW* 111). Because brave new worlders do not age visibly, the unnamed narrator finds it "hard" to pinpoint the D.H.C.'s age—"Thirty? fifty? fifty-five?" (3). If one assumes the Director is in his fifties, having abandoned Linda a quarter of a century ago, John and Bernard are both roughly 25. In Huxley's original conception, a less comical, potentially more heroic Bernard would have been the Director's age, that is, twice John's.

Instead of a 50-year-old Bernard returning to the reservation, this time with Lenina, to find Nina, whom he had lost there 25 years earlier, Bernard is the same age as Lenina and John. He need make only one trip to New Mexico, where he discovers Linda and the D.H.C.'s son. Lenina can infatuate Bernard and attempt to seduce John; this seduction would have been impossible if she and Nina were identical, and it would have been confusing if John had a mother named Nina and a love interest named Lenina.

Bernard and Lenina meet John 12 pages into chapter 7; he introduces them to Linda six pages from its end. Although Bernard finds the D.H.C.'s son instead of his own, this is still a useful discovery. Spying Lenina, Linda, who is all "flabbiness" and "wrinkles" with "sagging cheeks" and "purplish blotches" (138), confronts her former self. Part of a contrast in miniature between Malpais and Fordian London, Linda personifies the primitive past that John will be compelled to embrace in the novel's climactic debate. No brighter than Linda but shuddering with disgust at the sight of her, Lenina represents Mond's antiseptic alternative.

Section 3 of chapter 6 (the last eight pages) is also typed with black ribbon and may be as old, or nearly so, as TS 120–28. Beginning "The journey was uneventful" ("quite uneventful" on PS 116), these pages bring Bernard and Lenina to Santa Fe. Perhaps they formed part of the reservation episodes starting on TS 120 or were devised as preparation for them after Huxley changed his mind about commencing in New Mexico. If he considered starting the novel with section 3, the first seven paragraphs of chapter 8, in which Bernard solicits John's life story, became necessary immediately. All of chapter 7 describing Bernard and Lenina's reactions to Malpais, TS 94–119, are typed in purple ribbon and probably were written later than section 3, on which they elaborate without Lawrence's enthusiasm for Indian rites and rituals.

When Bernard telephones Helmholtz Watson from New Mexico, he learns that the D.H.C. is planning to follow through on his threat to send him to Iceland. Huxley worked into chapter 6 two preparations for Bernard's discovery of the D.H.C.'s son instead of his own: the Director's earlier threat to exile Bernard—it occurs in section 2, right after the D.H.C.'s revelation of his own trip to the reservation (*BNW* 114)—and the phone call to Watson. Of the seven references to Ford in chapter 6, two appear during Bernard's interview with the D.H.C. and another two are part of the telephone call. A fifth—"Our Ford loved infants" (*BNW* 109)—is one of the four holograph emendations discussed earlier.

The sole reference to Henry Ford in chapter 8 occurs in proof, not typescript, which is additional evidence for the primacy of TS 120–28. When the Savage asks Bernard if he is married to Lenina, the latter responds: "Ford, no!" (*BNW* 165). Surprisingly, Huxley's correspondence never refers to his work in progress by its Shakespearean title. Not until February 1932, a month after publication, did Huxley tell Mrs. Flora Strousse how "glad" he was that she "liked *Brave New World*" (*Letters* 358). Typescript for PS 163–65, wherein Bernard invites the Savage to London, and the latter, overcome, replies by quoting Miranda's line from *The Tempest,* "O brave new world" (PS 164; *BNW* 165), is missing. It seems incredible that these important pages were added between typescript and proof sheets. But in the pro-Lawrencian dystopia that Huxley originally started to write, jokes at John's expense were not a priority. The Savage may have been brought to London without speaking the novel's ironic title.[20]

§

An antiutopia that begins with John leaving the reservation for the brave new world better fits Huxley's account of how *Brave New World* "started out"—"as a parody of H. G. Wells's *Men Like Gods"* that "got out of hand and turned into something different from what I'd originally intended" (Interview 198). Prior to the Americanization of the typescript, Huxley's major model for the brave new world was the future society in Wells's 1923 fantasy. Several Earthlings are accidentally transported through time from the Maidenhead Road near Windsor Castle into another world thousands of years more advanced. One hears an echo of this in Bernard's remarks about living on a different planet in a different century from John (*BNW* 144).

One of Wells's Earthlings, Mr. Barnstaple, finds himself enamored of the new society, calling it Utopia, "the world of his dreams" (264). Through a series of conferences, Earthlings are taught how Utopia came about. After "nearly five centuries" of struggle (71), science and education prevailed. Wells's Utopians travel by airplane, communicate telepathically, and have solved the population problem. For the competitive instinct, they substitute creative service. Having outgrown the need for government, they go about naked, enjoying complete sexual freedom in a technologically proficient, disease-free society; eugenics guarantee there are "few dull and no really defective people" (73).

Surprisingly, Barnstaple's fellow Earthlings fail to perceive Utopia's superiority. When they plan a coup, he warns the Utopians. Nevertheless, this future society has no need for retardants. Barnstaple is the first to be sent back to his own time, a misfortune that leaves him "bitterly sorrowful" (296) yet physically and psychologically refreshed. A vacation in the Wellsian future has made him optimistic about the future of the human race.

John Savage's sojourn in the brave new world is the reverse of Barnstaple's in Wells's allegedly perfect society. The Savage's disappointment and death mock Barnstaple's heartfelt praise and reinvigorated sense of purpose. Instead of "demi-gods," males like "Apollos" for example (*Men Like Gods* 264, 26), the technologically oriented future of A.F. 632 deluges the Savage with regimented, pug-faced identical twins, such as the Gamma Plus dwarfs in chapter 11. When Huxley interpolated the riot at the Park Lane Hospital, khaki-clad Deltas swarm maggot-like around John's dying mother—"Twin after twin, twin after twin" (*BNW* 238). John fights to undo Huxley's version of the Wellsian future, not to preserve it. Having failed, he pleads to be sent away, but Mond vetoes his request.

Several of the opening typescript pages—TS 10, 11, and 13, for example—are typed with black ribbon and appear worn, frayed, and as faded as TS 120–28. This suggests that some form of the lecture scene was composed about the same time as John's account of life on the reservation. Huxley began either with the reservation or with the lecture, perhaps juxtapositioning two equally disturbing upbringings—the brave new worlders' in the Central London Hatchery's Fertilizing Room and Infant Nurseries and John's schooling by Linda, Popé, and Old Mitsima in New Mexico. The Savage may have been translated to London in time for the D.H.C.'s talk, much as Barnstaple attends explanatory conferences about Utopia in *Men Like Gods.*

In effect, Huxley began *Brave New World* twice. Both beginnings remain visible. Originally, the novel started on the reservation, then proceeded with John's London misadventures. When Huxley began the reorganized typescript with the D.H.C.'s lecture, the novel commenced in a Wellsian London that grows increasingly Fordian by chapter 3. *Brave New World* seems to begin a second time when the Savage arrives from the reservation. Readers are shown the brave new world through the eyes of the students on the lecture tour and again through John's as Bernard takes him around. Instruction is mandatory for Mr. Barnstaple and his fellow Earthlings, given their ignorance. With the Savage's London appearance reserved for chapter 10, Huxley had to pretend that the D.H.C.'s students, native brave new worlders, need orientation.

Jointly, lecture and history lesson parody the conferences in which Wells's Utopians outline their society for Mr. Barnstaple and his companions. They recall "The Great Confusion" from which "the universal scientific state" emerged after "nearly five centuries" (*Men Like Gods* 71). The brave new world has taken an equivalent time to reach perfection. Mond recounts absurdly gruesome highlights from the "Nine Years War" that began in A.F. 141; together with "the Great Economic Collapse," it ushered in Fordism, the World State. Particularly reprehensible atrocities include the use of anthrax bombs, the "Russian technique for infecting water supplies," machine-gunning "Eight Hundred Simple Lifers," the British Museum Massacre, and "the blowing up of historical monuments" (*BNW* 54–59).

"The reading of *Men Like Gods,"* Huxley recalled in a 1962 lecture,

> evoked in me an almost pathological reaction in the direction of cynical anti-idealism. So much so that, before I finished the book, I had resolved to write a derisive parody of this most optimistic of Wells's utopias. But when I addressed myself to the problem of creating a negative Nowhere, a Utopia in reverse, I found the subject so fascinatingly pregnant with so many kinds of literary and psychological possibilities that I quite forgot *Men Like Gods* and addressed myself in all seriousness to the task of writing a book that was later to be known as *Brave New World.* ("Utopias" 1)

Nevertheless, the first two chapters and the history lesson in chapter 3 still read best as a point-by-point repudiation of the Utopia Mr. Barnstaple admires.

§

Huxley supposedly preferred "constant piecemeal revision" (Wilson 30–31). That is, he produced "successive versions of typed pages," all of which he "revised by autograph emendations" (Watt 368). The novel allegedly grew by "insertions of short passages" typed or in ink or between lines, and by inclusion of "longer ink passages in 'balloons'"; rarely does one find expansions of "cancelled sections" or "whole new pages" (Wilson

35). But Huxley's letters in spring and summer 1931 suggest a major rethinking; they indicate that he undertook at least one massive overhaul of the *Brave New World* typescript. The modern literary masterpiece known as *Brave New World* is the result of this large-scale revision, much of it an Americanization.

According to Grover Smith's chronology, Huxley wrote *Brave New World* in just four months, "May–August 1931" (14), a remarkable achievement.[21] To Mrs. Kethevan Roberts, Huxley divulged on 18 May that his next novel would concentrate "on the horrors of the Wellsian Utopia and a revolt against it" (*Letters* 348). This sounds like the straightforward parody of *Men Like Gods* in which the Savage is brought from the reservation and, unlike Mr. Barnstaple, rebels against the supposedly utopian society to which he is exposed.

One can outline this Zamyatin-like, anti-Wellsian *Brave New World*. A Lawrencian Savage grows up on the reservation. Revealed to be Bernard's son, John is transported to a Utopia the reverse of the world state Mr. Barnstaple finds so attractive in *Men Like Gods*. Perhaps he arrives in time for the lecture explaining how this perfect society operates. Bernard shows the Savage the sights, such as the Bombay Green Rocket that fails to impress him in chapter 11. After about a fortnight, Bernard conducts the Savage to Mustapha Mond, and John delivers an unfavorable verdict. During this interview, the Savage raises the prospect of a serious revolt.

Huxley may have done most of this in the first three and a half weeks of May. That is, he had written chapter 8, chapter 1 and possibly 2, and chapter 17. Maybe he also had on hand Bernard and Lenina's flight to Malpais (part of chapter 6), John's tour of the brave new world with Bernard (chapter 11), and Lenina's abortive seduction of John (chapter 13). Chapters 1, 2, 8, and 17 contain only 11 references to Henry Ford, of which five appear in chapter 2.

By 27 May, however, serious complications had developed. Alarmed to be headed in new directions, Huxley confided to his brother Julian that a "literary catastrophe" had befallen him, due to which the past month's work "won't do"; it would have to be written "in quite another way" (*Letters* 348–49).[22] This refers, one supposes, to Huxley's decision not to begin on the reservation. With the force of an epiphany, he perceived a more ambitious project: condemning the future more broadly by enlarging the parody of H. G. Wells into a full-fledged anti-Fordian polemic. Instead of employing the Savage to discredit a Wellsian Mond in a dystopia that recalled Zamyatin's *We,* he would write as a total skeptic and dismiss Lawrence as well.

Extensive revisions were still under way a month later when Huxley informed Sidney Schiff that he was "rewriting large chunks" of typescript he had thought "definitively done" (Robert 73). "Large chunks" is a far cry from "successive revisions" of individual typescript pages (Wilson 31; Watt 368). Uncertain whether this revision would be "final," Huxley felt daunted by "great deserts of the yet unwritten" (Robert 73), including, one presumes, Linda's death scene and the hospital riot, a bigger role for Helmholtz Watson as beginning poet and aspiring mystic, and John's suicide.

Nearly three months after the missive to Mrs. Roberts, Huxley completed an enormous redoing. In a letter to his father late in August, he sighed with relief at having "got rid of" a "satirical novel about the Future" (*Letters* 351).[23] Between 27 May and 24 August 1931, Huxley transformed *Brave New World* from a burlesque of "the Wellsian Utopia" into a modern "satirical novel" of ideas about "the Future" in general. His quarrel was with the oncoming situation and all who were bringing it about.

The précis in Huxley's late-August letter to his father describes *Brave New World* as

> a comic, or at least satirical novel about the Future, showing the appallingness (at any rate by our standards) of Utopia and adumbrating the effects on thought and feeling of such quite possible biological inventions as the production of children in bottles (with consequent abolition of the family and all the Freudian "complexes" for which family relationships are responsible), the prolongation of youth, the devising of some harmless but effective substitute for alcohol, cocaine, opium etc:—and also the effects of such sociological reforms as Pavlovian conditioning of all children from birth and before birth, universal peace, security and stability. (351)

The reference to "Utopia" with a capital *U* connotes Wells; "production" is a code word alluding to Ford. The appalling society results from a synthesis of bad ideas. Fordian expertise supplies the common denominator: a mechanical conception of human nature. To achieve the unity, stability, and identity that Wells's universal utopia requires, brave new worlders are invested with Freudian formative experiences in Neo-Pavlovian Conditioning Rooms. Ford's principle of mass production is applied to impart identical traumas, those involving books and flowers, for example, in conditioning centers that follow the same procedures the world over.[24]

§

An early version of the novel's climax, the Savage's debate with Mustapha Mond, survives as TS B1–B9 in light, faded, purple type. This simpler affair is conducted without Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson. Part of the initial draft of *Brave New World*, it contains only two references to Henry Ford: Mond's resolution to keep "God in the safe and Ford on the shelves" and his exclamation "Ford forbid" when the Savage asks why brave new worlders are not allowed to do things "on their own" (*BNW* 272, 279). Chapter 16, the preliminary skirmish between Mond and the Savage with Marx and Watson involved, probably was written later than the climactic debate. It makes no fewer than six references to Ford, including the only mention of his autobiography: skimming *My Life and Work*, John concludes that Ford's life story "didn't interest him" (*BNW* 257).

On C1 and C2, which follow TS B1–B9 and may have been written when they were, the Savage invites Bernard to live with him in the country. "Linda died this afternoon," he tells Bernard, but does not say how. The earliest version of *Brave New World* did not dramatize Linda's death or the disturbance her distraught son causes at the Park Lane Hospital. Bernard declares himself willing to accompany John, provided he can get time off, a reply that reduces the Savage to violent laughter. If C1 and C2 originally followed John's interview with Mond, John's derision may have provoked Bernard to sterner measures.

Huxley demoted Bernard from virile protagonist to farcical antihero, a process that coincided with the Savage's decline from Lawrencian standard-bearer to futile alternative. Huxley transformed Marx into a smallish man with a large inferiority complex; he transferred Bernard's original physique and potential for rebellion to Helmholtz Watson. No longer intent on making Bernard and John father and son, Huxley chose Watson, not Bernard, for John's closest friend. In chapter 13, John has "made up his mind to talk to Helmholtz about Lenina" (*BNW* 222); his confidant in the typescript was "Bernard" (TS 179). When the Savage instigates a riot, Helmholtz plunges in while Marx hesitates on the sidelines.

Initially a minor figure, Watson is twice described as "little" (TS 95, 97). Huxley crossed out the first reference in typescript and omitted the second (Bernard's reference to "poor little Helmholtz Watson") between typescript and proof. He shrank Bernard instead. Three allusions to the excessive amount of alcohol in Bernard's blood surrogate, allegedly the reason for his smallness, are inked-in insertions (TS 83, 89, 114). Late in the composition process, Huxley bolstered Watson's role with a balloon-enclosed insertion of more than 50 inked-in words. Helmholtz declares himself "profoundly happy" with the extra latent power he feels welling up inside him (TS 172), a sign of poetic inspiration and mystical influx.

Originally, as Bernard's contemporary, Watson too would have been old enough to be John's father. In the revised typescript, where he is the 25-year-old Bernard's closest friend, Watson still gives the impression of being an older, maturer person; as his enlightenment begins, he experiences a secondary adolescence, a supplementary growth or rebirth. Although Huxley conceived Watson's expanded role late, he managed to make his importance clear by chapters 15–17, the confrontation with Mond. In contrast, Huxley compromised Bernard Marx by inserting two handwritten paragraphs in which he invites Miss Keate to one of his parties to meet the Savage. Huxley also typed in the advances Bernard makes to Eton's headmistress during the showing of the *Penitentes* film (TS 152–54). Before Bernard became popular as the Savage's guide, he frowned on casual sex.

Huxley wrote Linda's death scene by hand on 11 pages (TS 189–99, both sides of the pages as 189, 189², and so on). The absence of references to Henry Ford is not a factor. Huxley inserted this episode as chapter 14 to motivate John's attack on the Park Lane Hospital's menial staff; the attack is also a late addition but probably written prior to Linda's death scene. More of a skirmish than a full-scale uprising, the ill-fated soma riot is not the "revolt" against the Wellsian Utopia promised in Huxley's original plan (*Letters* 348). Huxley wrote the earliest version of the Mond-Savage debate without Linda's death scene as the pretext for the riot, probably without the riot itself. The earliest draft of the debate does not mention Linda's demise; nor is John's left hand, "bitten" (*BNW* 255) in the riot, bandaged. One concludes that the "revolt" was to be a consequence of the meeting between Mond and the Savage, not its cause.

Because Watson and Marx take part in the Savage's attempt to rouse the Deltas, they are brought before Mond along with John. On TS 208–11, Huxley incorporated them both into the opening stages of John's argument with Mond (*BNW* 256–61). But only Mond and the Savage talk on TS 212–14, which was surely written before TS 208–11. For TS 215–18 Huxley involved Watson and Marx again, breaking up the conversation with the latter's hysterical collapse (*BNW* 266–70). The order of composition for chapter 16 was most likely TS 212–14 (light, faded type with just Mond and the Savage), then TS 208–11 (dark purple type with Marx and Watson present), and then 215–18 (dark type with Marx and Watson included) (*BNW* 262–65, 256–61, 266–70). In chapter 17, where the type is light purple and faded throughout, the core interview pits John directly against Mond with no else present (TS 219–30; *BNW* 271–83). This scene perpetuates Huxley's earliest inspiration for a debate between opposing value systems.

Huxley probably added John's suicide (chapter 18) about the time he dramatized Linda's death and introduced Marx and Watson into chapter 16. TS 200–07, 208–11, 215–18, and 231–48—the soma riot, the two parts of the Mond interview with Watson and Marx present, and John's suicide at the lighthouse—are all in dark purple type. TS 177–88, which relate Lenina's attempt to seduce John much as I-330 sidetracks D-503 in Zamyatin's *We,* are in faded purple type; this episode must have been written about the same time as the earliest version of the Mond-Savage debate and may have led directly to it.

Building on the riot and John's arrest, Huxley energized the climactic debate with Mustapha Mond so that it became one of the finest discussion scenes the novelist of ideas ever wrote. A moderately dramatic encounter in which a D. H. Lawrence figure was to embarrass a Wellsian spokesperson was transformed into a highly charged exchange between champions of opposed and equally repellent philosophies: the revisionary world according to simple-lifers such as Lawrence on one side, the future world being concocted by Ford and Wells on the other. Instead of one alternative rebelling against another, Huxley staged the debate as a clash of inadequate perspectives the reader cannot resolve: Lawrencian primitivism versus Fordism—that is, Malpais versus the World State, life in a pueblo in the American Southwest versus life in an enormous factory.

Early and late, Huxley kept three cornerstones in mind: reservation scenes, introductory lecture on the brave new world, and the Mond-Savage confrontation. Each changed substantially as *Brave New World* became less a traditional antiutopia and more a satirical novel of ideas. John's experiences in Malpais do not open the final draft; nor does he turn out to be the brave new world's Lawrencian liberator. The D.H.C.'s introduction to a funny yet frightening scientific utopia is not just a parody of rationalization in the Wellsian World State; it expands into Mond's full-fledged history lesson on the Fordian world order. The argument between John Savage and Mustapha Mond becomes the novel's climactic dead end: instead of a revolution, two incomplete philosophies collide, neither able to defeat or accommodate the other.

§

Huxley traveled across America on the final leg of his round-the-globe journey in 1925–26. Summing up this trip in "The Outlook for American Culture," he declared that America had shown him the "immediately coming civilization" (1). During spring and summer 1931, events of the last decade coalesced for him. Huxley connected his negative vision of America in 1926 with his mounting disbelief in the utopian possibilities of Mexico and the American Southwest as they had been set forth in *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) and *Mornings in Mexico* (1927). He brought this vision of Fordian America and his increasing disdain for Lawrence's Southwest to bear on the contempt he had felt for Wells's *Men Like Gods* (1923).

Brave New World fulfills the string of prophecies in the opening paragraph of "The Outlook for American Culture." Huxley predicted that "the future of America" would be "the future of the world." Speculating on this American future, Huxley insisted, was tantamount to "speculating on the future of civilized man" (1). The world to come, America universalized, would be ruined by the "standardization of ideas"; "imbecility" will "flourish and vulgarity cover the earth" (9), which has happened by A.F. 632.[25] "The contemporary environment . . . is everywhere becoming more and more American," Huxley lamented; "it seems that the world must be Americanized" (1). Between May and August 1931, so too was the *Brave New World* typescript.

Notes

1. The signed typescript, 260 pages in three blue folders, is the centerpiece of the Aldous Huxley Collection in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, Austin. After pages 1–248 come 12 supplementary leaves: A1, an earlier version of 169; B1–B9, a rejected version of 208–17; and C1–C2 (in Huxley's handwriting), a rejected version of text missing between 230 and 231. The typescript was "disarranged" when the research center acquired it in 1958 as part of the T. E. Hanley Collection (Wilson 28). Pages have been numbered based on internal evidence and their order of appearance in the published novel. However, material found in the printed text is missing from the typescript between pages 81 and 82, 93 and 94, 131 and 132, 132 and 133, and 230 and 231. Pages 26 and 27 are half sheets, material on the torn-off top of one leaf leading to material on the torn-off bottom of the other. Donald Watt called the typescript a "conflation" of an "early" with a "later . . . but by no means final version"—in short, "a patchwork of Huxley's first draft and subsequent revisions before he put together fair copy for his publishers" (369). This echoes Robert H. Wilson's conclusion that "there was only one later manuscript version, a fair copy for the printer, very likely by a professional typist" (29). On page 1 of the typescript, signed "Aldous Huxley," what follows is described as "Corrected typescript—the nearest approach to a manuscript version."

The research center also houses a bound volume of "Authors Corrected Proof-Sheets 1932." For "alterations not marked on [Huxley's] proof," Wilson "suspects the work of an editor" between proof and first edition (30). But discrepancies between proof and first edition, as well as between typescript and proof, suggest that Huxley could not resist revising the fair copy intended for his publishers; he may even have made changes on a second set of proof sheets now lost.

Hereafter TS refers to the typescript, PS refers to the proof sheets, and *BNW* refers to the first edition of the novel, published by Chatto & Windus in 1932.

2. Ford narrowed the interval "between desire and its gratification" (*BNW* 50) by making car ownership possible for everyone.

3. Helmholtz Watson's oath "Ford in Flivver!" (*BNW* 250) when he is summoned to the riot the Savage has started at the Park Lane Hospital appears to be a variation. But if the holograph addition to chapter 3 was made when (or even after) Huxley wrote chapter 15, it may be said to embroider Watson's oath, the brave new world's substitute for "God in Heaven!" Our Ford, it has been noted, rhymes with Our Lord (Baker 25).

4. PS 62 and the first edition have no comma after "State." The period after "Sings" has changed to a comma, after which Huxley added "and Solidarity Services."

5. TS 57 is a busy page that also boasts a minor autograph insertion and a successful rearrangement of Fordian material. To the Controller's statement that "Two thousand pharmacologists and bio-chemists were subsidized," Huxley appends "in A.F. 178." "Six years later," the brave new world was producing soma commercially, so this narcotic, which came on the market in A.F. 184, is nearly 450 years old. Supplying dates for the discovery and production of soma connects Henry Ford with the doping of an entire society. Originally, Huxley typed: "There was a thing called Christianity. The new and happier era. All crosses had their tops sawn off and became T's." After crossing out the last two sentences, Huxley amended the remaining one-sentence paragraph between typescript and proofs: "There was a thing, as I've said before, called Christianity" (PS 61). Further down TS 57, Huxley reinstated the sawed-off crosses for greater effect. His autograph insertion opens a three-sentence paragraph, of which the other two sentences, the original paragraph, are typewritten: "All crosses had their tops cut off & became T's. Gradually suppressed; but not before adequate substitutes had been prepared. There was a thing called God." Huxley crossed out the two middle sentences, inserting "also" after "was" in the last line. Between proof sheet and first edition, "off" was eliminated from "cut off." Changes to the sentence about the fate of the world's crosses—cancellation, reinsertion to start a subsequent paragraph—produce a more dramatic impression of God's overthrow. The revised typescript portrays Christianity's demise and the death of God as separate, sequential events. Mutilation of the world's crosses into *T*s is a consequence of Christianity's demise in the earlier paragraph and the signal to abolish God in the later one. Two succinct paragraphs—the first with only one sentence, the second with two—emerge from what was originally five sentences of material. In the autograph emendation, crosses have their tops "cut off" instead of "sawn off" in the typed version of this sentence (TS 57). Huxley suggests execution, worldwide decapitations to exterminate Christianity in favor of the new religion from America. Altering "cut off" to "cut" weakens this suggestion; on the other hand, it connotes throat cutting, if not castration. That *T*s, the brave new world's religious emblem, can be salvaged from crosses, the emblem they displace, is a tribute to efficiency, a Henry Ford hallmark. Crosses remind one of Christ's sacrifice; *T*s venerate a secular success: the engineering, mass producing, and triumphant marketing of a commercial product. Ford's T-Model symbolizes a quintessentially American materialism. Making "the sign of the T," brave new worlders worship the person and process, both American, behind the auto's creation.

Ford's technological know-how and the mass distribution of consumer goods it facilitates acquire a religious aura.

6. In the first edition, Huxley closes a parenthesis he never opened. Later, when the D.H.C is poised to banish Bernard to Iceland, PS 175 delivers a parenthetical stage direction: "(here the Director made the sign of the T)." Ironically, he makes this sign just before Linda and John burst in and destroy his career (*BNW* 179).

7. Anti-Ford references constitute a defamatory thread running through the text of *Brave New World* the way a poet weaves a pattern of imagery into a poem. Five references in chapter 2: "while Our Ford was still on earth" (25); "Our Ford's first T-Model"; "a sign of the T"; *"A.F. 214"* (27); "Oh, Ford!" (32). Nineteen references in chapter 3: "in Our Ford's day" (33); "the time of Our Ford" (35); "his fordship"; "His fordship" (37); "from the mouth of Ford himself'"; "inspired saying of Our Ford's" (38); "Ford knew what" (39); "Our Ford—or Our Freud" (48); "Ford's in his flivver" (50); "his fordship"; "Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford" (52); "A.F. 141" (54); "A.F. 150"; "Our Ford's first T-Model" (60); "Ford's Day celebrations"; "Ford, how I hate them!" (62); "A.F. 178"; "Ford, I should like to kill him" (63); "his fordship" (66). One reference in chapter 4: "the Charing-T Tower" (68). Twenty-one in chapter 5: "Fordson Community Singery" (91); "an immense T" (91–92); two references to "Big Henry"; "Ford . . . Ford, Ford, Ford"; "Ford's Day"; "Thank Ford"; "Ford!" (92); "Ford!" three times (93); "sign of the T"; "another sign of the T"; "Ford, we are twelve"; "the shining Flivver" (94); "Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford"; "Ford!" twice (96); two references to "Ford and fun" (98); "Big Henry" (99). Chapter 6 contains seven references: "Oh, for Ford's sake" (104); "Thank Ford" (107); "Our Ford loved infants" (109); "Ford-speed" (110); "Ford knows" (112); "thank Ford"; "Ford!" (120). Chapter 7 also has seven references: "the Charing-T Tower" (126); "cleanliness is next to fordliness"; "Our Ford" (127); "Ford's Day" (131); "Ford! Ford!"; "Ford!" (138); "Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford!" (142). One reference in chapter 8: "Ford, no!" (168). Chapter 9 has four: "your fordship"; "Your fordship" (167); "his fordship" twice (168). Four also in chapter 10: "the teachings of Our Ford"; "the sign of the T" (175); "unfordly" (176); "Oh Ford, oh Ford" (178). Five occur in chapter 11: "(Ford!)" (180); "your fordship's" (187); "statue of Our Ford" (189); "Young Women's Fordian Association"; "Ford Chief-Justice" (195). Five again in chapter 12: "Ford's Day Celebrations" (206); "in the form of a T"; "the sign of the T" (207); "the golden T" (210); "Ford!" (213). Four in chapter 13: "for Ford's sake"; "My Ford" (220); "For Ford's sake" (225); "golden T" (227). No references in chapter 14, but seven in 15: "Ford!" (249); "Ford in Flivver!" (250); "Ford help him!"; "Ford helps those who help themselves" (252); "Ford be praised!" (253); "Ford keep you!" twice (254). Eight

references in chapter 16: "large golden T's"; "his fordship" (256); "OUR FORD"; "Society for the Propagation of Fordian Knowledge" (257); "flivvers" (260); "A.F. 473" (263); "Our Ford" twice (269). There are only two references in chapter 17: "Ford on the shelves" (272); "Ford forbid" (270), but seven in chapter 18: "the Charing-T Tower" (289); "Ford!"; "Fordey!"; "*Fordian Science Monitor*" three times (295-96); "by Ford" (299).

8. In "Sight-Seeing in Alien Englands," Huxley called Sir Alfred Mond's Billingham factory "one of those ordered universes that exist as anomalous oases of pure logic in the midst of the larger world of planless incoherence" (67–68), which is not as complimentary to the rationalization of society as it sounds. Huxley implies a counterpoint between "planless incoherence" and "pure logic," two equally unsatisfactory conditions. His 1927 essay "The Outlook for American Culture" contains this classic understatement: "Mass production is an admirable thing when applied to material objects but applied to things of the spirit, it is not so good" (7–8). Toward the end of "Sight-Seeing," Huxley rejected Ford's contention that the monotony of work under mass-production conditions exists not "in the shops" but "in the minds of . . . bookish reformers" such as the sightseeing essayist (74).

9. For an account of Huxley's shift from fascination with Ford in 1925–26 to profound contempt by 1932, see Meckier, "Debunking Our Ford." Having defined rationalization and weighed its negative impact on *Brave New World*, James Sexton dubbed Alfred Mond "the single Henry Ford at the head of Western Europe." Mustapha Mond allegedly resembles Sir Alfred physically (92–93). In "The Victory of Art over Humanity," Huxley accused Ford of wanting to turn the workforce into robots. Huxley observed that English "motor factories are not so completely rationalized as the corresponding thing in America," but any motor factory—no matter what "faultless, logical process" it is "the embodiment of"—struck him as a "pretty depressing" workplace (77).

10. Ford's frame of mind is blamed for every untoward development in modern urban industrial society—technological, psychological, sociological—since the advent of the T-Model. Ford's last name serves as the brave new world's most powerful prayer and heartiest curse. When the girl on Bernard's left at a Solidarity Service asks whether he has been playing obstacle golf or electromagnetic, Huxley originally typed: "Bernard blushed and had to admit that he had been playing neither" (TS 80). Retyped on TS 81, the last nine words of this sentence remain unaltered, but Huxley eliminated the first two words before redoing the opening half of the sentence in ink to read: "Bernard looked at her (Ford! it was Morganna Rothschild) and, blushing, had to admit he had been playing neither." On PS 92–93, there is no comma after "and"; instead of "blushing," Huxley opts for "blushingly."

Huxley moves "for Ford's sake" from last place to first when Lenina replies to Henry Foster's crude inquiries about her love life since her trip to Mexico. Crossing out "Oh, shut up," Huxley inked in "Oh for Ford's sake" while reinstating "Shut up!" at the end of the sentence, where he also crossed out the original "For Ford's sake." The result was more effective: "'Oh, for Ford's sake,' said Lenina, breaking her stubborn silence, 'Shut up!'" (TS 177). The first edition has a lowercase *s:* "'shut up!'" (*BNW* 220).

Spying Lenina at Malpais, Linda is so overjoyed that she hugs and kisses her. Huxley amplifies Lenina's disgust from "—oh, Ford!" to the double expletive "Ford! Ford!" (TS 114). Actually, he crossed out "oh," then wrote the new oath in the right-hand margin; the second "Ford!" begins the next typewritten line. In proof, thanks to an added conjunction, the distressed Lenina's thoughts run: "and—Ford! Ford! it was too revolting" (PS 138). Brave new worlders share Lenina's revulsion. Abandoned for years among reservation Indians, Linda has grown "Fat," with "bad teeth and a blotched complexion, and that figure (Ford!)—you simply couldn't look at her without feeling sick" (TS 145). The parenthetical expression of disgust is an autograph insertion. The first edition puts a comma after "teeth" (*BNW* 180).

Whenever Huxley crossed out a phrase that Americanizes the brave new world, a superior reference to the Fordian future already exists on the typescript page, or Huxley had a cleverer reference in mind. After Mond shows the Savage his collection of "pornographic books"—"books about God"—John asks why the Controller refuses to release *The Imitation of Christ* and *The Varieties of Religious Experience* for general consumption. For Mond's response, Huxley originally typed "they're old; they're about God hundreds of years ago, before Our Ford" (TS 220). Scratching out the last three words, Huxley replaced the comma after "years ago" with a full stop. He wanted to stress that ideas about God in philosophers such as William James are hopelessly outdated, not that they antedate Our Ford. Earlier on the page, Mond says that he prefers "God in the safe and Ford on the shelves" (TS 220; *BNW* 272). Huxley sacrificed the phrase "before Our Ford" because he had already done better: hypocritically, Mond privately savors texts that he restricts publicly. When Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson cannot find the Savage, they sense a crisis developing. "Where in Ford's name can he have got to?" Watson demands before Huxley cancels "in Ford's name" in favor of Watson's subsequent outcry upon receiving a call that John has instigated a riot: "'Ford in Flivver!' he swore, 'I'll come at once'" (TS 203; *BNW* 250). Huxley chooses the sharper oath. The statement that "There was the famous Cyprus Experiment of A.F. 475" has a line drawn through the date. Three lines further down the typescript page, this experiment is mentioned again: "It began in A.F. 473" (TS B6; *BNW* 263). Originally, having quoted Ford's "beautiful and inspired saying" that "History is bunk," Mond went on to celebrate a bunkless society: brave new worlders, he boasted, "have now given practical effect to what was, when Our Ford first uttered it, a counsel of perfection. The Past, the stupid unnecessary past, has been abolished" (TS 38). Huxley deleted this self-congratulatory elaboration, more than 25 words altogether. Instead, the satirist shows Ford's dismissive precept at work: waving his hand as if it were "an invisible feather whisk," Mond obliterates Ur of the Chaldees, Thebes, Babylon, Cnossus and Mycenae, Odysseus, Gotama, and King Lear—"all were gone" (*BNW* 38). Demonstration, Huxley felt, was more damning than explanation. When the Assistant Predestinator opines that Fanny Crowne is "Not so pneumatic as Lenina. Oh, not nearly" (TS 55), 13 words have been eliminated. Initially, Huxley followed this observation with a new paragraph consisting of an incomplete sentence: "A man called Napoleon at the beginning of the second century before Ford . . ." (TS 55). This sentence subordinates Ford when the point of the entire section is to regret the ideas and individuals that the American industrialist rendered obsolete—God and Shakespeare, for example.

On TS 217, Mustapha Mond pinpoints Ford's lifetime as the period when the brave new world altered the direction of scientific research: "Our Ford himself did a great deal to shift the emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness." On TS 219, a messier leaf, Huxley wrote in by hand, in the upper right-hand corner, the first eleven words of the sentence just quoted from TS 217. TS 219 (in chapter 17) probably was written before TS 217 (in chapter 16). When Huxley expanded the confrontation between Mond and the Savage to include a preliminary discussion involving Helmholtz Watson as well as John, he may have introduced the remarks atop TS 219 as part of Mond's conversation with Helmholtz. Ford's promotion of "comfort and happiness" also appears, typed, on TS B9, an earlier version of TS 217.

11. Wilson conjectured that "most of the typing is identifiable as Huxley's own" (28) but singled out no page typed by someone else. There are no black pages "written unmistakably later than nearby purple ones," he added (31). Having designated black pages "a kind of stratum in the history of the novel," he pointed to TS 120–28 as a sequence containing "information about the Savage's mother which is earlier than found anywhere else" (32). Yet Wilson feared that some purple typing may be older than black, whereas "differences in darkness of the purple ribbon are hard to interpret as evidence of age" (32). Nevertheless, Watt based his reconstruction of the composition process for chapters 15 through 18 largely on the different darknesses of purple-ink pages (379–80), an approach implicit in his observation that pages "with the typeface bold and clear" and with few "holograph revisions" contrast with pages of "faded typeface" containing "numerous" changes both handwritten and typed

(369). I base this essay on three assumptions: (1) All the typing most likely is Huxley's. (2) Black type characterizes the oldest leaves, but in some cases these are virtually synchronous with pages in faded purple. (3) Few if any bright purple sheets predate those in faded purple.

12. In the 1946 foreword to *Brave New World*, Huxley characterized "the author of the fable" as an "amused, Pyrrhonic aesthete" (viii).

13. Huxley denied having read Zamyatin but seems to know *We* very well. In *We*, for example, R-13 summarizes Adam and Eve's choice in paradise: "happiness without freedom, or freedom without happiness. There was no third alternative" (61). The brave new world solves "the happiness problem" by "making people love their servitude" (Foreword xiv). The question that Mond and the Savage debate is not just whether one can have freedom and happiness but which is preferable. Huxley regretted offering John "only two alternatives" (Foreword vii).

14. "Mexico" and "America, Listen to Your Own" are the titles of Lawrence's essays in *Phoenix*. If Huxley did not know these essays, he was familiar with their sentiments.

15. Donald Watt suggests a two-stage process: "Huxley at first thought of Bernard as the novel's hero, then switched to John as more fitting for the hero's role" (375). Actually, Huxley planned to unite a redeemer from without with a rebel from within.

16. "My great religion is a belief in the blood," Lawrence wrote to Ernest Collings on 17 January 1913, "the flesh as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true (*Letters* 96).

17. "At the time the book was written," Huxley lamented, he found the idea "that human beings are given free will in order to choose between insanity . . . and lunacy . . . amusing and . . . quite possibly true" (Foreword viii).

18. The first edition has a hyphen after "Streptocock" and commas after "Bye" and "noise" (144–45).

19. See Watt 380n10.

20. Also missing are typescript pages for most of the Solidarity Service (*BNW* 94–99) and for John's discussion of soma with Dr. Shaw at the start of chapter 11.

21. Of course, Huxley spent most of the twenties, especially the last years of that decade, schooling himself to write a dystopia. In the preface he contribut-

ed to J. H. Burns's *A Vision of Education* (1929), his skepticism regarding a genuinely benevolent system of eugenics and education is already manifest. See Meckier, "A Neglected Huxley Preface" and "Prepping for *Brave New World.*"

22. In this letter, Aldous canceled a trip to Russia with Julian because of difficulties with *Brave New World*. The need to "re-write," he informs his brother, "throws me right back in my work and as I must, if humanly possible, get my book done before the autumn I see no alternative but to renounce the Russian scheme altogether" (349).

23. David Bradshaw concluded that *Brave New World* proved "problematic" for Huxley because he was "unsure" whether he was writing "a satire, a prophecy or a blueprint." (Introduction vii). Actually, the completed novel may be read as all three simultaneously, the result of intentional irony rather than indecision. Bradshaw views the post-1929 Huxley as a supporter of government by men of rational foresight ("Open Conspirators"). But Huxley's response to Wells and Sir Alfred Mond is at best a preference for rationalization over chaos—for Mond and Wells rather than Karl Marx and communism—as the way out of an ever-worsening economic slump. When John Savage is offered a choice between "lunacy" and "insanity," Huxley imbues *Brave New World* with his sense of the early thirties as a dystopian time of impossible choices. In the finished novel, the alternatives become happiness or freedom, Mond (Wells) or the Savage (Lawrence), instead of rationalization or communism. Huxley saw Marx and Wells as proponents of happiness and enemies of freedom. Marx survives in the typescript as Bernard's last name.

24. See Meckier, "Our Ford, Our Freud" 35–42.

25. "In the United States," Peter Firchow argues, Huxley "recognized that what confronted him" was "the future of mankind." The "next step," Huxley predicted, would be "the Fordian (that is, American) world" (128–29).

I examined typescript and the proof sheets on a Mellon grant from the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center in February 1999. I quote from both with the center's permission. Earlier versions of this essay were delivered as a lecture at the Centre for Aldous Huxley Studies in Münster (June 2000) and as the keynote address to the International Huxley Symposium in Singapore (December–January 2000–01).

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The "Woman of No Appearance": James Joyce, Dora Marsden, and Competitive Pilfering

Thaine Stearns

> I have just re-read Episode III of "Ulysses." My dear editor go down on your knees & thank your stars for possessing *one* writer of metaphysics who is CLEAR! That's *ME!!* Joyce is . . . my word! He's appalling!
>
> —Dora Marsden to Harriet Weaver, 10 April 1918
> (qtd. in Lidderdale and Nicholson 147)

> I hope Miss Marsden's book came out punctually yesterday and I am looking forward to thieveries on an unheard of scale as soon as I can find an accomplice as rascally minded as myself to read it to me.
>
> —James Joyce to Harriet Weaver, 2 December 1928 (*Letters* 277)

Literary modernism is replete with rivalries between writers and ideas. This essay considers one of them: that between James Joyce and Dora Marsden. This rivalry took place over several years, was waged ultimately for status and recognition, and had marked effects on the work of both writers. Underlying it were several other binary oppositions: novelist/philosopher, time/space, subject/object, male/female, word/image. These oppositions often seem irresolvable, and they certainly underlie many other rivalries; but Joyce and Marsden ended up in a kind of collusion. Marsden's writings, including her penultimate book, *The Definition of the Godhead* (1928), articulate a oneness that binds difference and unifies oppositions; and that stance appealed to Joyce. He draws upon her ideas in *Finnegans Wake,* where he figures Marsden as the source of resolution for a parodic metaphysical struggle. In this way he attempts to restore her standing by positioning her as an arbiter in the modernist debate about time and space.

This rivalry and this collusion serve to raise larger questions about competition and its effects. While collaboration might seem to be more productive, could competition be just as helpful in generating literary work? Should we view rivalry as a defining feature of modernism, not only as part of its history but also as constitutive of its tropes?

The first part of this essay traces the history of the exchanges between Joyce and Marsden, demonstrating the terms of their rivalry and the pilfering that ensued. Rather than attacking openly, both writers competed by covertly borrowing from each other. The second part considers the resolution of their rivalry in Joyce's last novel, in Marsden's metaphysical text, and, more generally, in their modernist collusion. Ultimately, their competitive pilfering serves to illuminate one of modernism's general anxieties, reflected in Pound's claim that "there is . . . nothing that's quite your own" ("Portrait" 58).[1]

§

Marsden's status in literary modernism remains ambiguous. While her role as the founder and editor of the little magazines the *Freewoman,* the *New Freewoman,* and the *Egoist* has been documented in histories of the period, and while her crucial role in literary endeavors in the early years of the twentieth century has been recognized in recent criticism, there has been relatively scant attention paid to her extensive body of writing.[2] Yet Marsden's prose reflects a consistent engagement with general concerns of literary modernism—the ego and the individual, the status of the image, the nature of consciousness, and the relationship between time and space—even as interest in those concerns developed and evolved. Her work provides an important framework for understanding ideas crucial to the formation of modernism's canon, and we need to read her texts because they react to and significantly develop the literary philosophy of modernism. Moreover—and this is my concern in this essay—her responses to particular ideas of her contemporaries, and the exchanges engendered by those responses, help us to rethink our notions of influence and conceptions of individual genius in the period. I focus specifically on the indirect exchanges between her and Joyce that occurred from 1914 to 1928, in the course of which the two writers articulated seemingly distinct but finally similar positions regarding the metaphysics of time and space. These positions illuminate crucial aspects about each writer's philosophy of gender and the role of competitive exchange in constructing their fictions.

Because they never met or even wrote to each other, the primary evidence of the regard that Marsden and Joyce held for each other's work exists in their intertextual exchange. Marsden was an early reader of Joyce's first two novels, both of which were serialized in her journals, and her responses to those texts occur in the form of philosophical articles. She desired for her own work the critical attention and acclaim that Joyce's novels provoked; she viewed Joyce as a competitor, a writer against whose texts she should compare her own, and she believed that hers were inherently superior. At the same time that she asserted her superiority, however, Marsden was drawing upon Joyce's characterization of Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses* for her own philosophical ruminations. Joyce, meanwhile, participated in their indirect exchange as a borrower from her texts and as an implicit promoter of what she was trying to accomplish. While their exchange generated important ideas for both of them, Joyce's role as the primary beneficiary is confirmed by his status as an iconic modernist writer, a role he was becoming increasingly aware of by the time he wrote *Finnegans Wake*. Marsden's reputation waned considerably for various reasons, but Joyce was sympathetic to her and undertook to restore her importance, at least in his fiction.

Marsden's diminished stature in modernist circles can be explained in part by tracing a range of biases against her in the records of her contemporaries, particularly those in Pound's circle, which influenced the reception of her work by later modernist critics. Perhaps the most telling example occurs in Eliot's letter to his father soon after Marsden and Weaver appointed him assistant editor of the *Egoist:* he wrote of his "struggle to keep the writing as much as possible in Male hands, as I distrust the Feminine in literature" (204).[3] In a subsequent letter to art patron John Quinn, Eliot claimed that Marsden's philosophical articles "militated against the success of the paper with many people who did not want to read them" (315). For Eliot, then, Marsden's writings presented a problem on two accounts: a woman wrote them, and he blamed them for the journal's low circulation. Moreover, the neglect of Marsden's work also reflects unwillingness on the part of her contemporaries to engage with her combativeness and her often involuted prose style. Pound, for instance, communicated that he was more favorably disposed to Harriet Weaver's almost nonexistent authorial contributions to the journal, writing retrospectively after Marsden's death that Weaver's articles "made sense" relative to Marsden's.[4] Pound's verdict is tainted, however, because Marsden had aggressively demanded of him in the 1910s that he defend his poetic philosophy in his essay series "The Serious Artist," which had been published in the *New Freewoman*.[5] His claims about her logic 50 years later indicate, however belatedly, his response to her pointed, cogent opposition to his poetics.

Relative to his contemporaries, including the other "men of 1914," Joyce was a sympathetic and avid reader of Marsden's work. He benefited from the content of Marsden's ideas and responded to the scope conveyed by the topics she addressed in her philosophical writings and by the encyclopedic nature of the project that she undertook in the 1920s.[6] In the first of her books, *The Definition of the Godhead,* Marsden set forth as her objectives not only to define the universe—being, first principles, space, time, and reality—but also to reinterpret the entire history of Western thought. Her estimation of the revolutionary importance of her ideas was perhaps excessive, but Joyce admired her ambition and her savoir faire. Her similar motivations and writing concerns made her a worthy rival.

Joyce recognized that Marsden linked her philosophical concerns to the literary in ways like his own.[7] Both Kadlec (97–98) and Rabaté ("Joyce the Egoist" 46) have observed that Joyce carefully read Marsden's lead essays in the *Egoist,* especially during 1914–15, sometimes using his scarce funds to buy the paper when he could not get it sent for free. In those essays, Marsden makes clear that she saw herself as the modernist philosopher, a role that needed to be filled, she thought, and one that she felt more than capable of playing. However, she also understood philosophy and poetry to be inextricably connected, writing in a 1915 essay that "whatever form literature finally takes it is in its substance, Philosophy: curiosity about human nature: a laying bare of the springs of the human mind" ("Views and Comments" 167). Hence poetry and philosophical prose are part of the same continuum. If the writer is "too occupied, or too careless," she continues, "or has so much material . . . to put it all out at the expense of leaving it 'in the rough' it will remain as Philosophic Prose." Moreover, if she "cares sufficiently," she will communicate philosophy in "the most transparent and economized and accordingly the most permanent form to it: that of Poetry." Marsden's ideas intersected with the thinking of other, more famous contemporary philosophers, many of whom Joyce alludes to in his fiction, including Bergson, James, Wittgenstein, Whitehead, and Marsden's mentor at the University of Manchester, Samuel Alexander. Joyce's fiction is also imbricated with philosophy, overtly in Stephen's discussions and meditations, but also more generally in its ontological and ethical speculations. Thus, Marsden's exclamation to Weaver—that episode 3 of *Ulysses* ("Proteus") communicates an unclear metaphysics—reflects both her acknowledgment of Joyce's achievement (even in her apparent disapprobation) and her recognition of their shared belief that philosophy and literature are categorically the same project.[8]

The writings of Joyce and Marsden present a complex dialogue about visuality, the image, and time and space. While neither writer acknowledged the other in their published writing, the evidence for their exchanges can be found in their letters and in how each of their texts implicitly cite the other. Finding an adequate language to represent philosophical complexities was a manifest concern for both, as indicated by Joyce in the opening chapters of *Ulysses.* The metaphysical problem that confronts Stephen as he walks along Sandymount Strand in the "Proteus" chapter is the question of perception: how does one conceive the world if not through the eyes? The visible world is an "ineluctable modality"—providing signs to read (or "signatures") even in natural flotsam and jetsam: "seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot" (3: 2–3).[9] To test whether one can perceive the world without using language invested in visual metaphors, Stephen tells himself to "shut your eyes and see." As he walks along, eyes shut, he is forced to think about a language to express his perception:

> You are walking through it howsomever. I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space. Five, six: the Nacheinander. Exactly: and that is the ineluctable modality of the audible. Open your eyes. No. Jesus! If I fell over a cliff that beetles o'er his base, fell through the Nebeneinander ineluctably. (3: 11–15)

Stephen imagines that with his eyes shut the world becomes only audible, a place where objects are only perceived in time (*nacheinander*) and communicated through speech. It is a complicated matter, however, to excise his sense of space altogether. Later, when Stephen recalls this moment of his day in the "Scylla and Charybdis" chapter, he thinks: "Space: what you damn well have to see" (9: 86). For him the sense of space can only be derived through the eyes. Even with his eyes closed back on Sandymount Strand, though, Stephen imagines the "space of time" and the "short times of space," and, as he envisions himself toppling over an eroded edge of the bank, he sees himself in his mind's eye as an object falling through space (*nebeneinander*). As a modern artist but with limitations not shared by Joyce, his creator, Stephen still understands his world bifurcated into separate realms of time and space. Voluntarily blinded to the idea that his subjectivity includes both, he finds himself on the brink of falling into a new conception of art and existence.

His walk on Sandymount Strand is not the first time Stephen Dedalus ponders the philosophical and aesthetic implications of time and space. Gifford and Seidman (45) gloss *nacheinander* and *nebeneinander* as concepts derived from Lessing's *Laocoön,* the famous eighteenth-century philosophical essay concerning the limits of painting and poetry, which is directly referred to in Stephen's discussion with Donovan and Cranly about aesthetics in *A Portrait of the Artist as Young Man.* In Joyce's first novel, published initially as a serial in Marsden's and Weaver's journal the *Egoist* from 1914 to 1915, Stephen paraphrases Lessing's genre distinctions regarding painting as a spatial art and poetry as a temporal one, proclaiming them to Cranly as his own: "An esthetic image is presented to us either in space or in time. What is audible is presented in time, what is visible is presented in space" (212). Following this, Stephen's ruminations about *nacheinander* and *nebeneinander* in the "Proteus" chapter of *Ulysses* reflect the same aesthetic grounding; in *Finnegans Wake* these ruminations are developed into a general parody of the modernist debate about time and space. This debate proceeds in part out of Lessing's argument, which prescribes a separation of the sister arts into their "proper" categorical realms: poetry is a temporal art, while painting is spatial.

Marsden's borrowings from Joyce occur implicitly in essays she wrote for the journal that she was responsible for starting and that first published his writing. At the center of the literary circles that would constitute British modernism, Marsden wrote about the function of language and the role of the image in language at the same time that the journal was serializing *Portrait*. Then she wrote about time and space—her theoretical responses to the first chapters of *Ulysses*—at the same time that these chapters were serialized in the journal. This nexus of ideas continued to be her major focus, emerging again in her first book-length text on metaphysics, *The Definition of the Godhead*.

Marsden had begun attacking some of the primary foundations of modern Western thought before her responses to *Ulysses.* While she did not address Lessing's essay directly, she participated in the general fin-de-siècle interrogation of post-Cartesian philosophy advanced by Bergson[10] and, to a lesser extent, by William James. As early as 1913, for instance, Marsden proposed in an essay that the stream of thinking, rather than static thought, is the force that joins the individual with the phenomenal world. These claims are followed by an explicit discussion of Descartes's ideas ("Thinking and Thought"), the first of several attacks that became increasingly forceful.[11] By 1917, Cartesian dualism had become one of Marsden's primary targets—in fact, a synecdoche for other binaries:

> The first important corollary to such a conception of space is that it forces an immediate overhauling of the dualism with which Descartes handicapped modern philosophy at its inception, and which has preyed upon its strength from that day to this. The essential oneness in difference of the cognitional activity involving as it does both "poles" (positive and negative, subjective or objective, just as we choose to name them), lays a ban upon a division into a "mind-stuff" which cognizes on the one hand and a "stuff" of a different kind which is cognized on the other. ("Observations" 19)

Thus, the first binary to be overhauled must be the Cartesian contrast between *res cogitans,* a thinking thing, and *res extensa,* an extended thing or material substance.[12] This same essay begins to lay out other associated dualities that issue from this first principle, but stops short of making an explicit claim against the idea that essential, fixed boundaries exist between subject and object, time and space, male and female. Her claim for a "oneness in difference," however, asserts a complex, multidimensional dialectic between opposing poles that results in new philosophical, linguistic, aesthetic, and political unities. If existence can no longer be divided into thinking things and extended bodies that are thought about, Marsden asserts, then there are critical effects implied for language and representation. She then articulates the need for a new kind of language practice to address the complexities that emerge with this post-Cartesian view. She communicated this idea in "Lingual Philosophy," the first in a lengthy series of essays on linguistics, the nature of the verbal image, and the metaphysics of time and space: "language . . . must be made adequate to express time and space and all other and more complex aspects not covered" (100).

Although Marsden wrote about time and space well before 1917, she deferred addressing these ideas directly until after she had worked out her ideas on the image, a set of concerns related to the issues addressed by Lessing. In an essay from 1915, for instance, she wrote:

> It is perhaps of the first importance that the verb "Perceive" should be put in its correct Time-relation (if we may so call it) to the verb "Be" and its forms, and that "Things perceived" should be put in their correct Space-relation to the "I" which perceives them." ("Truth and Reality III" 66)

In other words, the perceiving subject, engaging in the temporal activity of seeing, has to address the spatial extension of what is seen in time. Like Bergson and James, then, Marsden posited a spatial-temporal flux of perception, language, and being that contrasts with both Cartesian duality and Lessing's genre division. In the same essay she argued that an individual circumscribes what he or she conceives as "space" and that time is defined by an individual's sustained effort to apprehend the images in that space. "The feeling of Space," she writes,

> is that of calculation as to the amount of expenditure in effort which is likely to be necessary in order to bring our sensing organs at their most effective point (i.e. the surface of the body) into immediate touch with the image called "External." (68)

More succinctly, we need to understand the distance between our bodies and things in the external world, which, until we are in direct physical contact with them, remain as images. On the one hand, while Stephen cannot help but conjoin space and time in his thinking—"A very short space of time through very short times of space"—like Descartes and Lessing, he insists on distinguishing them as separate aspects of reality.[13]

On the other hand, from Marsden's perspective, an individual's perception of space is inextricably connected to the time of conscious perception; in effect, time and space are part of the same phenomenon within human consciousness.

As the letter to Weaver quoted in my epigraph indicates, Marsden chose to conflate Stephen's ideas with Joyce's, allowing her to set up Joyce as a competitor so she could differentiate between his metaphysics and her own. At the same time, however, Marsden borrows Stephen's ideas to use as a springboard for her own positions, which end up more aligned with Joyce's own thinking than she acknowledges. Marsden had read early sections of *Ulysses* by April 1918; Harriet Weaver had sent them to her in manuscript form. She was quick to respond: as her letter shows, she perceived Joyce to be a rival "writer of metaphysics," the ground that she had spent several years staking out as her own in her lead essays for the journals that she had founded. Beginning with the May 1918 issue, she began to critique Joyce's earliest chapters. Even though she does not mention Joyce or Stephen Dedalus, the focus of her critique emerges in her implicit attack on Stephen's ideas about separating time from space in perception. Her May 1918 essay argues that philosophy had categorically defined humans by either their sensory relationship to external stable objects or by their engagement with an inner world of consciousness. The former is the visible world of space; the latter is an abstract, temporal realm. Marsden takes exception to this split, asserting, "Any object is *known* when we have experience of it under two orders of existence" ("Our Philosophy" 66–67). Any definition of intellection or perception, therefore, that splits them into two disparate parts, misunderstands the nature of knowledge and of reality. She asserts this point in a convoluted passage that proclaims what "all who seek to expound reality" must understand:

> The bifurcation of the hitherto single order of sensed-existence into the two orders of thought-existence and real-existence matches precisely that emergence of dual agencies, opposite but related, which supervened upon the organic world in the principle of propagation of organic species by the joint action of male and female. . . . Both create their antithetically related differences out of powers which basically are homogeneous and one. ("Our Philosophy" 68)

In other words, the split between time and space harbors other divisions between mind and matter, subject and object, and male and female. Marsden viewed these "antithetically related differences" as constituent parts of a complex whole. Simply put, while Stephen (and in Marsden's stated view, Joyce) articulated traditional philosophic bifurcations, she believed her modern philosophy would serve as a corrective to this misconception.

Ultimately, however, Joyce and Marsden concurred in their treatment of time and space. Both viewed the idea of existence as divided into two opposing realms as a persisting construction to be undermined. In fact, Marsden's reading of "Proteus," like that of many Joycean critics who followed, misses Joyce's ironic treatment of Stephen, or she disregards it intentionally to foreground her argument about time and space, an argument that is, finally, against gender categories. Despite his effort to analyze perception as dichotomous, Stephen cannot finally make the distinction between time and space that he tries to enact by shutting his eyes as he walks along the beach. In her "opposing" account, Marsden argues that space is neither organic nor intuitive; it emerges as a construct that stands in contrast to sensory, external images:

> The idea of space took its origin in men's minds as the spontaneous logical translation of the limited power of the organic nucleus to negotiate sensory forms, either by moving through them or round them. The idea sprang up betimes in man's cultural history, and came by its most indelibly marked features at a time when man was more habituated to the acceptance of sense-forms at their face-value than he is now.
> ("Space and Substance" 102)

In her view, then, images (or "sense-forms") were like "natural" signs, insofar as they were "spontaneous logical translations," integrated into the vital flux of the individual being. However, she also argues that images become part of a spatial construction in men's minds (these minds are gendered male) as a consequence of their inability to translate or to conceptualize them as integrated into a spatial-temporal flow. Moreover, just as she viewed the idea of space as a cultural and historical construction, so she also asserted that simple time is another human invention, intended to organize these disconnected "sensory forms":

> This imperfect time is our new man-devised instrument for arranging into a new kind of order all the spatially arranged items which man finds lying higgledy-piggledy about his universe. Just as space serves as a sort of laboratory bench upon which the substantial items lie strewn in mere superficial contiguity, so time serves as a powerful refractive instrument: an amazing synthetic device. ("Measure of Authority" 36)

Marsden imagines in this passage a more perfect conception of time, an organic force comprised of space-time that constitutes subjective life, in contrast to "human time," the "man-devised instrument" that orders and arranges illusory spatial objects about a constructed universe. Again, in her analysis, a gendered critique of these constructions is more than implicit: it is "man's cultural history" in which the notion of a masculine "imperfect time" arranges feminized spatial constructs at will in "superficial contiguity."

Marsden's exclamation to Harriet Weaver about episode 3 of *Ulysses* foregrounds her misinterpretation of Joyce's ideas; her misreading, perhaps intentional, suggests that Joyce's ideas could be equated with Stephen's. Yet it is this slippage that initiates her series of essays on time and space that appeared in the journal's pages in ensuing months. As demonstrated with the "Nausicaa" episode, however, Joyce's ideas do not settle easily into fixed binaries, including the ones that Marsden assigned to him via Stephen Dedalus. This later episode of *Ulysses* parodies conventional representations of women, including genres of painting, as timeless images of beauty, figured in static space. For example, Gerty MacDowell is characterized in terms of a Renaissance portrait: "The waxen pallor of her face was almost spiritual in its ivorylike purity though her rosebud mouth was a genuine Cupid's bow, Greekly perfect" (13: 87–89). Even in this static characterization, however, the narrative tells us parenthetically (and ironically) that Gerty, along with Edy Boardman and Cissy Caffrey, "had of course their little tiffs from time to time like the rest of mortals" (13: 94). The injection of the clause "from time to time" is not just an incidental idiom—in fact, time becomes an increasingly critical factor in this episode: Cissy Caffrey asks Leopold Bloom the time just as he and Gerty begin their flirtation (13: 544–545); he notices that his watch has stopped, later realizing that it stopped at approximately the time Blazes Boylan and Molly met to have their affair

(Joyce gestures ironically here to the ekphrastic "pregnant moment"[14]); Gerty thinks that "Edy and Cissy were talking about the time all the time" (13: 574–575); and, as "His dark eyes fixed themselves on her again drinking in her every contour, literally worshipping at her shrine," Gerty "could see the gentleman winding his watch and listening to the works and she swung her leg more in and out in time" (13: 556–557, 563–564). Joyce's narrative here breaks up the static "undisguised admiration in a man's passionate gaze" by reinserting women back into time, thus undermining conventionally gendered representations of women in painterly space (13: 565). In effect, "Nausicaa" undermines Stephen's ideas about clear divisions between time and space, and it parallels Marsden's conception that sensory forms are integrated into the vital flux of individual consciousness, thus subverting representations of women as static, spatial objects.

§

Joyce's recognition that Marsden was engaged with questions and issues similar to his own is evident in his expressed intention to borrow from Marsden's *The Definition of the Godhead* for *Finnegans Wake.* In addition to the letter quoted in the second epigraph to this essay, Joyce initially communicated his interest in Marsden's work in another letter to Weaver, while her book was being readied for printing by the Egoist Press:

> I am sure that you are passing many valuable things through your hands in going through Miss Marsden's work and if I had sufficient energy to be lively about anything at present I should be as restless as a small boy outside a pantry thinking of all the nice little bits I could pilfer with no loss to her but oh the difference to me, as Mr Wordsworth remarked. (*Letters* 272)

Joyce's intention to "pilfer" from Marsden's forthcoming book is all the more striking because of his allusion to Wordsworth's poem "Song," one of the "Lucy" poems.[15] The allusion is significant for several reasons. The narrator of the poem describes his subject elegiacally: "She *lived* unknown, and few could know / When Lucy ceased to be." From 1920 until 1935, Marsden lived in Seldom Seen, a nearly deserted miner's hamlet in Cumbria County, in Wordsworth's beloved Lake District, the setting for his "Lucy" poems. Marsden's status as a respected activist and writer had declined significantly from the previous decade, and the irony presented by the name of her chosen residence was not lost on Joyce. His implied comparison of Marsden to Lucy is especially telling when we recognize that in Wordsworth's poem Lucy has already died: "But she is in her Grave, and Oh! / The difference to me." Wordsworth's Lucy causes him to mourn, but Joyce picks up on the irony of the loss: it is her death that has given the poet the opportunity to articulate his own lyric subjectivity in the form of his poem. For Joyce, pilfering from Marsden's book would mean little to her; like Lucy, she had become unknown, "Half-hidden from the Eye!"

Joyce's borrowings from Marsden's text become evident when Marsden's claims about time and space in *The Definition of the Godhead* are delineated. Her main argument shifts the emphasis from her earlier critique in the *Egoist* essays of gendered constructions of time and space. Instead of a singular "Space-Time," Marsden argues for first principles in a dualistic universe, working together as contraries. In this book Marsden figures space as an eternal mother and time as an eternal father in the universe, two contraries that together forge the "One; the Absolute" (19, 28–29). Positing space and time as interconnected dualities then enables her to argue that feminine space is the source of everything, including time. According to Marsden, this understanding was lost because men had found this conception of the universe a "stumbling block." In effect, she challenges conventional tropes of philosophic thought for their misogyny, asserting that men found the "truth" of a feminine first principle problematic:

> [they] were torn in their allegiance, finding satisfaction neither in calling heaven (the soul of the world) Satan, the principle of evil; nor in calling Her (the All-Mother) the All-Father; nor in calling Her (who was the source of all) a non-entity: non-being: nothing-at-all; while as for styling Her what She truly was (i.e. at once the mother-principle and the governing, form-determining principle, the nurse and home of all remaining things), the emphasized masculinism of the period could not easily brook it. The net result was a veiled yet fiercely real intellectual war. (199)

The idiosyncratic theological aspects of her "science of first principles" underscore Marsden's effort to narrate an epistemological ontology that subverts masculine hierarchies in thought and language. She also tried to avoid setting up just another hierarchical structure: instead, the text posits a female deity presiding over its masculine other, yet operating together in a conjunctive, "non-differentiable whole" (168). In this system, space constitutes an ocean-like continuum, while time is a moving stream. Although these tropes are conventional, her text offers this original slant: space is the source of time, which is a "secret" that she had "uncovered" and that she imagined would change the course of thought.

While her text is constructed as a series of philosophical analyses and histories, Marsden was entirely cognizant of composing a kind of fictional ontology in this work. Much earlier, in her 1914 essay "Culture," she had asserted that "All our Gods we create on one principle: we create them in our own image, and give them proportions to match our own" (321). When she later made claims for a female deity in *The Definition of the Godhead,* then, she understood that she was engaged in an imaginative act. In this later work, she explicitly refers to her own process of thinking as one of construction, which, unlike a "cosmogonical" or scientific intellectual activity, is an artistic act of imagination. Distinguishing the two forms of intellectual activity from each other, Marsden writes:

> Now, concerning ontology, we have to say . . . that this intellectual activity is not to be regarded as a science, for all forms of the latter are activities bent upon the discovery of the generative factors which go to produce things. Ontology, on the contrary, is an art. It is the art of classification, of grouping, of arranging the universal content on a plan not of a genealogical-table linking up parents and offspring: effects with their causes: but of a segregating (mentally) of like form with like form. (41)

By proclaiming ontology an art, Marsden argues for her philosophical practice as a radical engagement with metaphor, the juxtaposition of linguistic images in an imaginative association. In effect, Marsden understood her work as poetic creativity; in this regard, the text asserts, "theories of the rank of first principles are required to interpret *poetically*" (163). Poetry therefore constitutes the only language practice capable of transfiguring temporal, transient things into the eternal. Indeed, she defines poetry as the presentation of "mundane things in the light of the eternal," thus defining what her "science of first principles" must accomplish.

Beneath the grandiose philosophical and historical framework and the argumentative rhetoric, Marsden's objectives in *The Definition of the Godhead* are subtler and more interesting than they might at first appear, as Joyce anticipated in his letters to Harriet Weaver. In part because of her dedication to the book, "To THE GREAT NAME HUSHED AMONG US FOR SO LONG of HER, HEAVEN, THE MIGHTY MOTHER of ALL," Marsden's conception of her text has been misconstrued by the few critics who have bothered to comment about her project. Garner and Lidderdale and Nicholson find this dedication curious or disturbing because of its religious tone.[16] However, both of these accounts miss the connection of this dedication to the title of Marsden's first journal, the *Freewoman*. As Robert von Hallberg has observed (66), this title comes from a passage in Galatians (4: 26) which is cited in Max Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* (157), a key influence on Marsden and other early modernists: "The Jerusalem that is above is the freewoman; she is the mother of us all." With Joycean self-referentiality, the dedication in her later book alludes to the earliest of her published writing, when her essays were radically feminist and concerned with political and social ethics. The underlying objective of *The Definition of the Godhead* is similar: instead of feminist politics, Marsden shifts to a feminist philosophy in which she imagines a utopian Jerusalem, an emancipated freewoman signified by a female deity.

Marsden's assertion of a feminine godhead, freed from masculine misunderstanding, offers a means to interpret Joyce's most explicit reference in *Finnegans Wake* to his counterpart writer, the woman who founded the journals responsible for publishing his first novel. A few pages before the story "The Mookse and the Gripes," Issy announces, "I'm so keen on that New Free Woman with novel inside" (145), an exclamation that has perplexed some Joyce scholars because *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was published in the *Egoist,* not the *New Freewoman.* Joyce added Issy's utterance in one of his final revisions of part 1 in 1936 (*Finnegans Wake Facsimile* 287), which indicates that he viewed "The Mookse and the Gripes" as connected to Marsden and his own history with her journals in a more fundamental manner than when he originally conceived of the story in 1927. What this chronology does not explain, however, is why Joyce switched the title of the publication that was instrumental in fostering his career. Rabaté argues that Joyce's inversion of the titles paradoxically demonstrates his preference for the later journal.[17] Kadlec argues instead that Joyce's conflation of the two journals reflects the lasting impression that they had on him as he wrote *Finnegans Wake* (276n20). While both of these readings are illuminating, Joyce's pilfering from *The Definition of the Godhead* needs to be taken into account as well. To be sure, Marsden's interest in the time and space debate appealed to him. Joyce was also aware of the Stirnerian connection of her journal's title to Galatians. Issy's reference in *Finnegans Wake* to "that New Free Woman with novel inside" thus refers not only to Joyce's first novel and its publication in Marsden's journal but also synecdochically to Marsden herself, as the new free woman, with a novel (both new ideas and a fictional text) inside. By doing so Joyce simultaneously gestures to Marsden's career, to the intersections with his own, and to her idiosyncratic ideas in *The Definition of the Godhead.*

Joyce made significant revisions to "The Mookse and the Gripes" after *The Definition of the Godhead* was published in December 1928. The fable was revised primarily by the additions to the beginning of the story: after a grand greeting ("Gentes and laitymen, fullstoppers and semicolonials, hybreds and lubberds"), the story begins: "Eins within a space and a wearywide space it wast ere wohned a Mookse. The onesomeness wast alltolonely, archunsitslike, broady oval, and a Mookse he would a walking go" (152).[18] In her book, Marsden asserts as a first principle that space engenders time, and, in Joyce's lines, this idea is echoed by the "wearywide space" where the Mookse "wohned" ("ere wohned," German for "he lived," puns on Butler's *Erewhon,* which means nowhere).

The allusions in this section of *Finnegans Wake* to a range of ideas in Marsden's career that interconnected with Joyce's own publishing history reflect his thinking about Marsden and her book. Marsden's advocacy of egoism pervades the description of the Mookse's surroundings, whose "onesomeness wast alltolonely"; moreover, this phrase also serves to describe Marsden's lonely existence in the hamlet Seldom Seen. In an essay from 1914, Marsden argued for the difference between "Anarchists" and "Archists" ("Illusion" 341), a discussion Joyce picks up in "archunsitslike." During the same year, Marsden's journal was serializing *A Portrait of the Artist,* and we can hear the resonance between that novel's opening lines—"Once upon a time and a very good time it was"—and the inversion from time to space in the opening lines of "The Mookse and the Gripes": "Eins within a space and a wearywide space it wast." Joyce's reflection on his own career emerges in these lines as well:

Stephen's childhood innocence in the beginning of his first novel has been transformed into the weary spaces of *Finnegans Wake*.

Joyce's other changes to "The Mookse and the Gripes" after the publication of *The Definition of the Godhead* are woven into the wordplay and linguistic textures that make up the fabric of the novel, and these revisions reflect a range of positions in the modernist debate about time and space, one of which is certainly Marsden's. A more extended analysis of "The Mookse and the Gripes" shows that Joyce uses the story to introduce a Marsden-like figure and to parody the group of twentieth-century writers, including Marsden, Lewis, Bergson, Whitehead, and Samuel Alexander, who asserted positions about this metaphysical question. Several Joyce scholars have read this fable only as a response to Lewis's *Time and Western Man* (1927), which, in a chapter entitled "An Analysis of the Mind of James Joyce," took *Ulysses* to task for its participation in time aesthetics.[19] This argument does not take into account, however, at least two important considerations. The first is the timing of Joyce's revisions to the story after Marsden's book was published. The second is an issue of content. In particular, Joyce added more allusions to time and space in his revisions to the story completed in early 1929. "The Mookse and the Gripes" is told by Professor Jones, a Lewis stand-in who is figured as "so eminent a spatialist." The preface to the fable is a Jones lecture that shifts almost imperceptibly from discussing time and space to finances, and the professor rants about the "same dime-cash problem elsewhere." Just as Lewis critiques Bergson and Einstein in *Time and Western Man,* Professor Jones attacks "the sophology of Bitchson" and "the whoo-whoo and where's hairs theorics of Winestain" (149). Certainly this fable parodies Lewis's arguments in *Time and Western Man:* the Mookse who in exasperation asks the Gripes "Is this space of our couple of hours too dimensional for you, temporiser?" (154) serves as a kind of space-mind, while the Gripes, "his Dubville brooder-on-low" (153) (Dublin brother-in-law) offers the time perspective, tormenting his counterpart with the question, "By the watch, what is the time, pace?" (154). We also see here Marsden's argument in her lead essays in the *Egoist* against the separation of a single order of existence reprised in the question asked by the Mookse, if "this space . . . [is] too dimensional." In short, while Lewis's polemics play their part in the argument, it is too simple to claim that "the emphasis in this fable is clearly on the disjunction of space and time à la Lewis" (Otte 301). Marsden's position appears here too in the suggestion that time and space are conjoined in a single entity.

Joyce provides more than just elliptical references to Marsden's ideas in *Finnegans Wake,* however, in his effort to recuperate Marsden as a writer of significance. When the argument between the Mookse and the Gripes finally ends, with both combatants spent, a Marsden-like figure appears on the scene to carry the two combatants away. The woman is unnamed but, once again, the passage teems with allusions:

> Then there came down to the thither bank a woman of no appearance (I believe she was a Black with chills at her feet) and she gathered up his hoariness the Mookse motamourfully where he was spread and carried him away to her invisible dwelling, thats hights, *Aquila Rapax,* for he was the holy sacred solem and poshup spit of her boshop's apron. So you see the Mookse he had reason as I knew and you knew and he knew all along. And there came down to the hither bank a woman to all important (though they say that she was comely, spite the cold in her heed) and, for he was as like it as blow it to a hawker's hank, she plucked down the Gripes, torn panicky autotone, in angeu from his limb and cariad away its beotitubes with her to her unseen shieling, it is, *De Rore Coeli.* And so the poor Gripes got wrong; for that is always how a Gripes is, always was and always will be. And it was never so thoughtful of either of them. (158–59)

Joyce captures two aspects of Marsden's career and character in the woman who shows up on opposite banks of the river to carry the two combatants away; what links the two allusions to Marsden is their residence. The "woman of no appearance" carries the Mookse "away to her invisible dwelling," and "woman to all important" carries the Gripes "with her to her unseen shieling."[20] As his correspondence with Harriet Weaver attests, Joyce was well aware that Marsden, who had become a writer of no importance, was residing in Seldom Seen, in a former miner's cottage that lacked running water and electricity.[21] Weaver, who visited Marsden several times, once complained that it was so cold there in the winter that she had to get dressed in bed, and then had to break the ice in the pipe from the spring (qtd. in Garner 156). The woman who appears in this section has "chills at her feet" and a "cold in her heed," an allusion to Marsden's poor health, caused by her living conditions. More crucial is the function that the woman of Seldom Seen fulfills here: overseer to the end of the furious battle between the Mookse and the Gripes. Although the woman, like Wordsworth's Lucy, is unknown and unacknowledged, Joyce inverts the relationship between the living and the dead: here the unnamed woman comes to take away the near-dead combatants.[22] In her second appearance, on "the hither bank," the woman is "to all important," a critique often directed at Marsden by her detractors and by Joyce's contemporaries.[23] The unnamed woman, Marsden's stand-in in *Finnegans Wake,* is both unseen and important in Joyce's story, a paradoxical representation worthy of Marsden. In his final summation, The Mookse (the space mind) "was the holy sacred solem and poshup spit of her boshop's apron" and "had reason as I knew and you knew and he knew all along," while "the poor Gripes got wrong." In effect, Joyce gestures toward Marsden's argument for the preeminence of a feminine space in *The Definition of the Godhead.*

Joyce's allusion to Marsden and her obscure volume in *Finnegans Wake* serves as his effort to restore her standing and propagate her ideas. Marsden asserted in *The Definition of the Godhead* that the philosopher of first principles must have "a mental courage great enough to dare those great mental sweeps through the universe—in its entirety, which involve such profound intellectual and ethical consequences" (164). As a writer who sought to include everything in her texts, she intrigued Joyce. In Marsden's words, their parallel effort was "to succeed in the task we have undertaken of presenting the entire body of knowledge as a single cultural unit" (*Definition* 30–31).

In some sense, Marsden's book serves as an apt demonstration of precisely the element for which she has been consistently criticized—her audacity in presuming her own genius. Her philosophical project is immensely grand in scope and design, and perhaps its failure to find a receptive audience besides Joyce attests to Marsden's propensity to overreach. This aspect of failure is a fate that many of her contemporaries escape, however, even when they engage in projects that, like Marsden's book, are encyclopedic in their effort to include everything. The proliferation of attention to Joyce's novels and Pound's *Cantos,* as two examples of encyclopedic reach, has resulted in part because of their scope. Like Marsden, these two modernists self-consciously promoted their own genius in many ways, but especially with texts that, as Bob Perelman writes, create an "aura of illegible authority" surrounding the artist—"a lure for endless study" (1–2). Perhaps, then, what Marsden's strange and abstruse texts require, to legitimate her sense of her own modernist entitlement, is Joycean attention. By giving more consideration to Marsden's work, we would be more likely inclined to attend to the climate of competition and the practice of mutual borrowing in literary modernism.

Notes

1. The modernist anxiety regarding plagiarism and, more generally, "borrowing" ideas is reflected in various ways. Pound's prescription to "make it new," for example, suggests the modernist concern about originality. Wyndham Lewis's paranoia about stolen ideas is evident in many of his texts when he parodies unoriginal artists or overtly attacks other writers for plagiarism. In his 1937 novel *Revenge for Love,* for example, Victor Stamp paints counterfeit Van Goghs (226); and in his posthumous novel *Roaring Queen,* Rhoda Hymen (a caricature of Virginia Woolf) gives herself the award for The Year's Cleverest Literary Larceny for *not* stealing from an "unknown American novelist" whose name happens to be Wyndham Lewis (100). In his chapter on Woolf in *Men Without Art,* Lewis claims that Woolf creates an "exact and puerile" copy of parts of Joyce's *Ulysses* in *Mrs. Dalloway* (138).

2. Recent scholarship on Marsden has focused either on her work as an editor or on the influence of her writings about Stirnerian anarchism and the individual ego on Williams, Pound, and Joyce. See, for instance, David Kadlec for discussions of Marsden's influence on all three of these writers. Also, see Jean-Michel Rabaté's *James Joyce and the Politics of Egoism* for a discussion of Marsden vis-à-vis Joyce. Bruce Clarke considers especially Marsden's early writings and their influence on Pound and Williams. Other recent publications that offer significant commentary on Marsden include those by Vincent Sherry, Mark Morrisson, Paul Peppis, and Robert von Hallberg.

3. Eliot replaced H.D. as assistant editor of the *Egoist* for the June 1917 issue. His letter to his father is dated 31 October 1917. His antipathy to Marsden is reflected more directly elsewhere; for example, in a 9 July 1919 letter to John Quinn, he wrote "I have only met Miss Marsden once, and then (in strict confidence) frothed at the mouth with antipathy" (315).

4. Pound to Jane Lidderdale, 12 July 1962. Qtd. in Lidderdale and Nicholson 472n1.

5. Clarke details the exchange between Marsden and Pound and the debate that took place in the *New Freewoman* between them in her "Views and Comments" column and in his series of essays "The Serious Artist" (110–17).

6. The Egoist Press published two volumes of Marsden's metaphysics, out of her initial plan for a three-volume series, which later she projected to be as many as eight. The two volumes, *The Definition of the Godhead* (1928) and *The Mysteries of Christianity* (1930) had low print runs and generated little public interest. The press published 500 copies of the first volume and 250 of the second; Weaver was unable to sell many copies of either volume. In 1955 Weaver arranged with the Holywell Press for publication of five chapters of a third volume provisionally titled *Time and the Homo-centric Universe.* The five chapters were published as a 34-page pamphlet titled *The Philosophy of Time.*

The appeal of such encyclopedic projects for Joyce has been well documented. See for instance Attila Fáj and Peter Munz.

7. This is a perception that her critics have generally missed. Following Pound and Eliot, criticism of Marsden has typically focused on her abstruse prose, her ostensible turn away from feminism, and her apparent disregard for literary concerns. We can observe the influence of Pound's and Eliot's views of Marsden in criticism as early as Glenn Hughes's *Imagism and the Imagists* (1931):

> Not the least amusing thing to one who looks through the complete file of the *Egoist* is the never-ending stream of abstraction contributed by Miss Marsden. Except for one or two occasions when illness intervened, she never failed to exercise her privilege of occupying the first page (and usually several other pages into the bargain). What she wrote had not the slightest connection with the other contents of the paper, and was studiously overlooked by most readers. (31–32)

Even Marsden's biographer, the social historian Les Garner, views her work as too removed from "life and reality" and, thus, implicitly irrelevant. He writes:

> If the "British Public" struggled with Joyce's prose they had an almost impossible task in unraveling Dora's own philosophical ramblings in *The Egoist*. In particular, [her writing] tended to be based on unsubstantiated assertion. It lacked realism and was expressed in inexorable prose. (144)

Garner also reads Marsden as having a negative attitude toward imagism and other literary interests in the journal. I concur with Clarke: Garner is "often out of his element in literary discussion, and he commits factual errors that diminish the usefulness of his work" (94n4).

8. The "Proteus" chapter of *Ulysses* was the second to be published in the *Egoist.* Although the *Little Review* serialized Joyce's novel in the United States

before the *Egoist* published it in England, Harriet Weaver, who communicated regularly with Marsden regarding editorial issues with the journal, was directly involved in all phases of the novel's publication. See Lidderdale and Nicholson's account of her role in publishing the novel (199–200).

9. References to *Ulysses* give episode and line.

10. See, for instance, Bergson's *Matter and Memory:*

> The mistake of ordinary dualism is that it starts from the spatial point of view: it puts, on the one hand, matter with its modifications, in space; on the other hand, it places unextended sensations in consciousness. (220)

11. Both Kadlec and Clarke discuss the exchange of ideas between Marsden and Pound, especially in regard to Pound's essay series "The Serious Artist" and Marsden's reaction to his ideas. Neither Kadlec nor Clarke, however, discusses the striking differences between Marsden's attacks on Cartesian thought and Pound's affirmation of Cartesian geometry in his essay "Vorticism." This disagreement was another source of contention between the two ambitious writers. Pound's essay stands as his assertion of his own importance in modernist letters, and his analysis depends on privileging Descartes. Marsden's attack on Descartes served notice to Pound of her contrary view of his significance.

12. Although it is impossible to know whether Joyce utilized Marsden's discussions about Descartes before writing the "Proteus" chapter, he had probably read the *New Freewoman* and the *Egoist;* Pound sent him copies of the *New Freewoman,* and Harriet Weaver sent him copies of the *Egoist.* As Wendy Steiner has pointed out, in his walk along Sandymount Strand, Stephen Dedalus reenacts "a good portion of the history of philosophy" (33), including Descartes. Just before the passage quoted above ("You are walking through it . . .") Stephen meditates about the extension of bodies in space: "Then he was aware of them bodies before of them coloured. How? By knocking his sconce against them" (3: 8–9).

13. Steiner overlooks Stephen's argument about Lessing in *Portrait* and thus reads his meditation in "Proteus" as a correction of Lessing: "whereas for Lessing these were two incommensurate realms, for Stephen temporal sequence and spatial contiguity have proved interchangeable" (35). Unless Stephen had revamped his aesthetic theories completely in his time away from Ireland, my reading is more consistent.

14. The "pregnant moment" in painting is analogous to the ekphrastic object in poetry, when the temporal movement of the action is ostensibly "suspend-

ed," creating a painted image or one that can be "seen" in the text. Lessing's *Laocoön* (1766) famously articulated the prescription that a visual image was most appropriately purely spatial, suspended in time. This dictate is undermined by ekphrasis, of course. Joyce and other modernist writers overtly challenged Lessing's ideas with their verbal depictions of representational space. For discussions of ekphrasis and its relationship to time in painting, see W. J. T. Mitchell's "Ekphrasis and the Other" in his *Picture Theory* and James Heffernan.

15. The entire text of Wordsworth's "Song" follows:

> She dwelt among th' untrodden ways
> Beside the springs of Dove
> A Maid whom there were none to praise
> And very few to love
>
> A Violet by a mossy stone
> Half-hidden from the Eye!
> —Fair, as a star when only one
> Is shining in the sky!
>
> She *lived* unknown, and few could know
> When Lucy ceased to be;
> But she is in her Grave, and Oh!
> The difference to me. (147–48)

16. See Garner 167 and Lidderdale and Nicholson 284.

17. Rabaté makes the convincing case that Joyce's references to the journals are not just fictional expressions of gratitude but that he had an intellectual and aesthetic interest in a feminist egoism, stemming from Stirner. He argues that Joyce quotes Marsden when Stephen Dedalus struggles with belief and doubt in a scene from *Ulysses*, thus foregrounding the author's interest in the work of his philosopher colleague. In Rabaté's words, Marsden and Stephen "both insert the famous phrase [from the Gospel of Mark, 'I believe, help though my unbelief'] in a context that stresses the value of doubt and the need to resist the authoritative injunction to believe" ("Joyce the Egoist" 46–47). After Stephen states the famous phrase, he adds, "Who helps to believe? *Egomen*. Who to unbelieve? Other chap." As Rabaté points out, it was Marsden who believed in and published Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* while George Roberts had hesitated to publish *Dubliners,* finally destroying the manuscript.

18. First composed in pencil in July or August 1927, "The Mookse and Gripes" was revised by Joyce in late August 1927. He revised it again for *Tales*

Told of Shem and Shaun, most likely in April 1929. See *Finnegans Wake Facsimile* 75.

19. See, for instance, George Otte.

20. Roland McHugh glosses "shieling" as "a hut" (159). Its "unseen" aspect suggests Marsden's residence.

21. In his letters to Weaver after 1918, Joyce often sent his regards to Marsden and asked about her well being, referring at one point to Marsden as "my fellow sufferer." This acknowledgment of Marsden's health problems indicates that physical ailments similarly hindered their concurrent efforts to write and publish, but Joyce also implicitly grants Marsden an equal status to his own (286).

22. Joyce's allusive play between dead and near-dead relies on the ambiguity in the Lucy poems about Lucy Gray's mortality and her living presence in the landscape (see "Lucy Gray" lines 57–58: "Yet some maintain that to this day / She is a living Child").

23. Eliot and Pound each complained that they thought Marsden was high-handed in her management of the *New Freewoman* and the *Egoist*. However, Harriet Weaver continued to consult her about day-to-day operations of the *Egoist* even after Marsden had voluntarily acceded this control to Weaver in 1914. See Lidderdale and Nicholson 87–88.

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Alyse Gregory, Scofield Thayer, and the *Dial*

Barbara Ozieblo

From its very beginnings, women played a significant role in the editing of the *Dial* magazine, originally the organ of the New England Transcendentalists. Margaret Fuller's role as editor for the first two years, from 1840 to 1842, has now been recognized, and Marianne Moore is celebrated as editor for the last four years of a later series, published by Scofield Thayer from 1919 to 1929. But another woman, Alyse Gregory (1884–1968), who was an invaluable consultant to Thayer during the *Dial*'s early New York modernist phase and managing editor in 1924 and 1925, remains an obscure figure.[1]

Obscurity is the fate that Alyse Gregory would probably have chosen for herself; however rebellious in her youth, she never felt confident of her talents, and grew more and more reticent with the years. Her orthodox literary tastes, which she imposed on the *Dial,* contrast with her bold novels, acute psychological studies of restive young women struggling against the fetters of conventionally acceptable behavior. Gregory joined the *Dial* at a critical moment, bringing the order and continuity that her friend, Marianne Moore, would later build on. Although Moore worked on the *Dial* longer than Gregory and was freer of Scofield Thayer's guiding hand, she continued the editorial and artistic policies that Gregory had established.

Scofield Thayer (1889–1982), a stockholder in the *Dial* since 1918, bought the magazine out in November 1919. On 22 October 1922 he made the following proposition in a letter to his close friend Alyse Gregory:

> [A]llow me to run through once more the terms in accordance with which Mr. Watson and I would like to thrust upon you the managing editorship. Salary indefinite probably 75 weekly. . . . You would have in fact almost complete control of the paper merely acknowledging Mr. Watson as president and myself as editor before the public.

This curious offer was further qualified in following sentences with strictures such as: "You would also I trust take our advice when we on our own hook might suggest some writer or article. . . . Also when Mr. Watson or I travel abroad you could give to him or to me as much authority as you saw fit." Then Thayer high-handedly suggests that Gregory limit the number of articles to be published by specific contributors who do not meet with his full approval. "But in case you should [not do as I want] I give you now the tip that you had better watch my fingers should they hover in the neighbourhood of your teacup" was an avuncular indication of who would be in charge. Nonetheless, when Thayer resigned in June 1925, he insisted in his "Announcement" (533) that the decisions concerning the contents of the magazine had been colored by the personalities of his staff, and that Alyse Gregory's contribution had been vital.

Gregory had been refusing Thayer's job offers for well over a year already, insisting on her lack of skill and knowledge, but also, knowing her friend's high-handed ways, she preferred to heed her own need for independence. She would continue to balk at the honor he wished to bestow on her for another year. When, finally, she did give in to his pleas and took on the managing editorship of the *Dial* at the end of 1923, it was only for a year and a half. Gregory had known Thayer for some years before she agreed to work on his magazine and had found his company stimulating. She probably knew, however, that he planned to spend most of his time in Vienna and that his persecution mania—which Sigmund Freud had declared incurable—would make working with him difficult. She also knew that his policy for the *Dial* was set—it was to be a showcase for his varied aesthetic preferences—and that he would never relinquish the reins.

After the death of Randolph Bourne, the essayist and literary critic, Thayer had decided to abandon the model of the short-lived periodical *Seven Arts,* which he had initially hoped to emulate. Instead, he planned to make the *Dial* a purely literary and artistic review with no ideological program. Proud of the peerless lineage of the magazine he had acquired with his friend James Sibley Watson, Thayer compared his endeavors with those of Fuller and Emerson in his January 1921 "Comment." Here he hopes that just as the Philadelphia *Gazette* had declared in 1840 that "these editors were considerably madder than the Mormons," someone would "in a clear tipstaff voice" declare him to be equally deranged in his literary tastes (122–23).

A lively interest in central European letters and art made Thayer a worthy successor of Margaret Fuller, who early recognized the greatness of Goethe. Thayer believed that Alyse Gregory, fluent in French, German, and Italian, could be trusted to pick out the pieces he wanted to publish. He described these pieces in the March 1920 "Comment":

> If a magazine isn't to be simply a waste of good white paper it ought to print, with some regularity, either such work as would otherwise have to wait years for publication, or such as would not be acceptable elsewhere. The inevitable and the "impossible" pieces of work give the special tone to a magazine which must, in the interest of completeness, publish a number of other things which are, in any case, predestined for publication. (408)

In its early issues, Thayer's *Dial* published T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and works by Marianne Moore, Ezra Pound, E.E. Cummings, D. H. Lawrence, Joseph Conrad, Thomas Mann, Bertrand Russell, and George Santayana. It also reproduced art by Charles Demuth, John Marin, Pablo Picasso, Gaston Lachaise, and Henri Matisse, among many others. Thayer loved to shock the middle classes but, above all, he wanted excellence—on his terms. He declared that age, sex, nationality, and ideological persuasion of the artist were irrelevant as long as *he* perceived that *perfection* had been attained. In *Scofield Thayer and the* Dial, Nicholas Joost insists that the magazine had no official politics or policy, and that it

> consistently took chances with unknown writers, whom it published as equals of the better known contributors. The bias of Thayer and Watson was not solely favorable to literary and artistic experimentalism, nor was *The Dial* oriented toward the new aesthetic forms at the expense of the traditional ones despite its hospitality to the new formalism. (60)

Perhaps somewhat naively, Joost claimed that "what the *Dial* demanded of its prospective contributors was simple excellence" (60). Thayer's idealistic vision of the role of his journal met with Gregory's full approval—she too believed in an unspecified *perfection* as governed by *her* taste (which generally coincided with Thayer's) and determined by a modernist eclecticism that was frequently at odds with her conservative background. Daniel Catton Rich defines the goal of the *Dial* with somewhat greater rigor when he recognizes that "its program was to create the awareness of tradition, linking the best of the preceding generation with the new" (23).

Alyse Gregory, in spite of her "beautifully kept hair" (Moore, *Alyse Gregory* 2) had always been a nonconformist. She ran away from kindergarten because the jackstraws that she had been given to amuse herself with "seemed to open out before [her] hours of painful tedium to be crowned at the end by certain failure" (Gregory, *Day* 16). Her refusal to conform, fueled by this early fear of failure and boredom, established a pattern for her life. Years later, her response to Thayer's repeated job offers was characteristic: "I was convinced that I would fall far short of his expectations, and I valued my freedom above all other things" (*Day* 194).

Gregory was born in Norwalk, Connecticut, in 1884 into a family of considerable standing, though much of their wealth would be lost during the Depression. Her father, Dr. James G. Gregory, was eulogized in the obituaries published by the local press as the "beloved physician" (*Norwalk Hour*) who left "many great monuments in this city to testify to his greatness in life" (*South Norwalk Sentinel*). In spite of his professional success and the ordinary differences of opinion between generations, he gradually learned to respect his daughter's whimsical ambitions. She refused to contemplate marriage, which she considered "a sedative or a poison" (Diary 14 November 1912); and even when she wrote him of her plans (not fulfilled) to become an unwed mother, he assured her of his love whatever she chose to do (James G. Gregory). Her mother was far more critical than her father, constantly upbraiding her youngest daughter for the intensity and sensitivity she showed. Gregory would later write in her autobiography that she "used to try more and more cunningly to hide my feelings" (*Day* 18). Agnes de Lima, one of her oldest and closest friends, would write after her death, "no one was more reticent than she. . . . I always knew . . . that she was hiding."

Recognizing her musical talent and excellent singing voice, her parents sent Alyse to Paris in 1899, when she was 15. In her autobiography, written in 1948, Gregory describes her singing lessons and first performances in an offhand fashion. However, her accounts of meetings with such luminaries as Jules Massenet, who accompanied her on the piano as she sang an aria from his *Manon,* make it clear that the more significant moments of her life in France had to do with her sexual awakening—those moments of "swooning giddiness" (*Day* 33) or "delicious, shivering excitement" (35) when a handsome man laid his hand on hers.

Her singing lessons continued for four years, in Paris and New York, until Gregory decided that she "lacked the necessary enterprise and perseverance" to become an opera singer, and that, true to her desire to hide from the world, she preferred "to pursue ends concealed from others" (*Day* 91). There followed some years of intermittent European travel, financed by teaching French to the young ladies of Norwalk, and then an idealistic interest in town politics that led to work in education and women's suffrage in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. All these activities, however, left her saddened and depressed: "All day I have felt oppressed as if born down by a weight," she wrote in the blue notebook that served as a diary on 20 July 1911. A visit to a hat factory had "overwhelmed" her (13 May 1911); and on 24 September 1912 she complained: "I have been going from house to house trying to persuade women to vote for the school question. No one is in the least interested. Why do I do it? Why try to awaken people who don't know whether they are awake or asleep?" And the staggering drunkards brought in to "vote against the ladies" at the New Jersey referendum on women's suffrage constituted "a lesson I never forgot, and at the moment it made me feel hopeless about all social reforms" (*Day* 118).

In spite of such disappointments, she persevered in her idealistic efforts to bring justice to the world. She organized suffragist plays during the summer of 1913, gave suffragist speeches at town fairs, and marched in the annual parades. Randolph Bourne, who would serve as the model for the hunchback writer in Gregory's 1931 novel *Hester Craddock,* and who was at least a little in love with her, wrote her in December 1914: "You cannot think how I envy you with all your hustle and adventure of work, your crowds of interesting friends, and your ostensibly—though you do so often hint differently—so easy command of life" (278). As always, and even writing to so close a friend as Bourne, Gregory could only "hint" at the deeper pessimism with which she regarded her life.

She always belittled herself, as Bourne had immediately realized on their first meeting, which had followed an intellectual correspondence that she had instigated after reading his essay "The Excitement of Friendship" in the *Atlantic* in December 1912. In June 1913, Bourne wrote, "I had, as I told you, puzzled over you a good deal, and it was so delightful to meet you as you are, and not as you had colored yourself in the somewhat grey tones that belied you, or some of you" (87).

Whatever her private doubts and uncertainties, and whatever the dissatisfactions with her frequently changing and largely unsatisfying jobs, by 1918 Gregory was the "social focus" for a group of New York writers and artists and was known and loved for her "firesides" (Bourne 419) at her 5 Patchin Place residence. According to Harold Stearns, her little salon was the scene of "some of the wittiest and shrewdest conversation and comment of our day" (138). Eventually, tired of doing work that did not excite her and still refusing Thayer's offers of a secretarial position, she decided to try to earn her living by writing. The *Saturday Review of Literature, Vanity Fair,* the *New Republic,* and the *Freeman* began to accept her reviews and essays, and "So started my literary career—if it merits to be called such. It was a gambler's life, but perhaps a little better than robbing on the highway" (*Day* 200).

Bourne, whom Thayer had selected to be his political editor for the *Dial* (Peltier 53), had brought his friend to Patchin Place, and Gregory captivated him immediately. They became close, although she gives no hint in *The Day Is Gone* that the friendship ever became sexual. As Thayer's paranoia developed throughout the twenties, she was, for a time, one of the few people he would trust. In her description of him in *The Day Is Gone*, Gregory, whose life was circumscribed by literature, compared Thayer to Proust in his hatred of noise, to Maupassant in his dexterity as a yachtsman, to Byron in the curve of his lips and his "overrefined tastes and sensibilities," and to Diderot in his horror of being bored (178–79).

Watson, Thayer's partner in the *Dial* venture, was another young man of means with an aesthete's delight in art and good conversation. Botlh found that Gregory's incisive comments spurred editorial decisions and helped them select winners from the piles of manuscripts they received. On at least one occasion, Thayer expressed his "sincere and profound gratitude for having kept out of our pages [John Middleton] Murry and [Theodore] Dreiser" (qtd. in Sutton 288).

Gregory's deep-seated feminism and her humanitarian stance also led to the rejection of Ernest Hemingway's stories and poems. She would not allow Thayer to convince her of their merit, suggesting that her usual subservience to his wishes was a ploy that she adopted only when it suited her. She would never forget her disapproval of a story, probably on bullfighting, that Hemingway submitted after she had published a basically favorable review by Edmund Wilson of *Three Stories and Ten Poems* and *In Our Time* in the October 1924 issue of the *Dial* (Joost, *Years of Transition* 255–56). Her indignation grew with the years. Much later, in 1956, she attacked the Nobel Prize winner, piercing mercilessly through his macho armor: "In his complete identification with the matador—*de fond à comble*—does not he too triumph over death? And is it not this that makes him 'feel good,' able to return to his cocktails in the hotel lounge with light heels and a free heart?" ("Six Deaths" 135). Gregory accused Hemingway of converting a form of entertainment that inflicted death on a helpless living creature into a spectacle that was "not only fashionable . . . but respectable"; for her it could never be more than a "relic of barbarism" (132).

After 1922, Thayer spent most of his time in Vienna, and Gilbert Seldes, overseen by Watson, was first associate and then managing editor. Thayer's obsessions gradually focused on Seldes, and he hoped that by appointing Gregory managing editor he would be able to oust his one-time friend and collaborator. He lambasted the unwitting Seldes in his letters to Gregory:

> I am wholly dissatisfied with his attitude toward *The Dial* and toward myself [,] also with his either incompetent or unpardonably callous editing of such important departments as the Notes on Contributors . . . and of our own advertisements. . . . his theatrical criticism and his Comment I find comically influenced by my own contributions to those sections and not for the better. (22 October 1922)

Gregory, while still refusing to join the *Dial*, attempted to appease its owner: "Of course your irritation over Mr. Seldes' ubiquotousness [sic] is thoroughly understandable," she wrote, "he has taken rather a bound upward and outward since your restraining hand was no longer here to keep him in order. But really you are crying out against his limitation and not his good will" (10 November 1922).

Gregory's diplomatic skills were also needed when it came to Watson, co-owner of the *Dial*. In his case, however, Thayer's irate comments were provoked not only by imagined incompetence or lack of aesthetic judgment but also by his jealousy over Gregory's attentions to him (Sutton 287). Indeed, she reassured him with detailed accounts of what she did with Watson:

> *Our* relationship, his [Watson's] and mine, runs now in more or less settled grooves—a half hour or so at tea time twice a week—Always very charming and companionable half hours, and I have for him the feeling you do not understand, affection—and I am always interested in his processes and evasions. (29 January 1922)

Gregory eventually capitulated to Thayer's insistence that she take on the managing editorship of his magazine. Underlying her refusals was her lifelong desire to hide her imagined inadequacies from others. By 1924, however, she was a woman of 40, and although she remained reticent and retiring by nature, the small successes she had experienced in the literary world had given her some measure of confidence. Also, while firm in her rejection of the institution of marriage,[2] she was by this time living with Llewelyn Powys, a British writer who was making a name for himself in America. Whether he encouraged her to join the *Dial*'s staff is difficult to tell, but she may well have felt that they could do with a steady income. Whatever the reason, she eventually gave up her "humble liberty" (*Day* 205) and succumbed to Thayer's pleas. Characteristically, she undervalued herself:

> Scofield—always with the same alarming and ungrounded idea of my ability—thought that with my literary tastes, at once adventurous and old-fashioned, and my special knowledge of advertising I would make a lucky successor [to Seldes]. (*Day* 202).[3]

Nonetheless, she thrived in the exalted position that the *Dial* editorship immediately conferred on her: young men took their hats off to her in the street and invitations to parties poured in. Even Amy Lowell, "famous as a patroness of art and letters" (*Day* 205), invited her to dine.

The decisions she made in 1924 would prove critical in determining the later years of Alyse Gregory's life. Although she was what Moore recognized as a "natural feminist" (*Alyse Gregory* 2), she succumbed to the entreaties of two men. Paranoid Scofield Thayer lured her with his pleas to save his magazine from the sly machinations of other men, and the consumptive Llewelyn Powys charmed her with his old-fashioned British manners and claimed her love. Gregory must have questioned her decisions in much the same terms that her protagonist in *She Shall Have Music* worries over her agreement to marry:

> Would she be able to keep alight the fragile wick of her own unservile, unimpeachable judgement? Would she be able to look with single, mocking hardihood at every peril of the coursing days; or would she be tied to her love more dangerously than she had ever been tied to the unproductiveness of eventless hours? (263)

Initially, in spite of Thayer's growing distrust of the *Dial*'s staff and her lover's craving for attention, all went well. But then Powys's tuberculosis recurred, and by late summer the couple had moved to Montoma, in upstate New York, in search of pure air and fresh milk for the invalid. Gregory was forced to commute to Greenwich Village—as infrequently as her duties allowed her. By September she felt she could no longer continue to satisfy the demands of both men and wrote to Thayer: "I shall always love and honour you, Scofield, but I cannot obey even so regal and considerate a master as yourself without doing violence to that very fragile little shoot from which comes my confirmation" (September 1924). Powys's temperature was constantly elevated, and she knew he depended on her to meet all his needs.

A few weeks later she wrote to Thayer again, this time flatly announcing that she was marrying Powys the following day and that Marianne Moore had agreed to take over at the *Dial* (29 September 1924). How Gregory reconciled herself to this marriage is difficult to fathom. The entry in her diary for 1 October 1924 suggests her resistance to it: "Yesterday was my wedding day. It is what Llewelyn wanted, but some cloud lies upon my spirit as if I had betrayed something in myself" (*Cry of a Gull* [a published portion of Gregory's diary] 21). The decision to marry was so sudden that not even her parents were given enough notice to attend the wedding. That Gregory felt she was betraying her principles is evident in Agnes de Lima's later account: she "begged forgiveness for yielding to what she called 'bourgeois inanity.'" She even gave de Lima the lame excuse that she needed to marry to obtain a passport!

Thayer, although very generous to Powys during his illness, had never particularly cared for him. Now he did his best to keep Gregory on the job. He first threatened to close down the *Dial* if she abandoned her post, but finally agreed that she should spend one week of every month at the offices in New York and the rest of her time in Montoma, "thus rendering conceivable partial co-habitation with her husband" (Sutton 292) while still fulfilling her editorial duties. He hoped she would be able to continue reading the manuscripts that came in, go over the proofs, look after the slip-sheet, and take care of the correspondence. He reported to Watson that Gregory "believes that she can carry *all the work of every sort* which she has been doing for *The Dial* almost equally well under the new arrangement" (Sutton 292; Thayer's italics). Gregory agreed to a reduction in salary for the three weeks she would not be at the office, accepting $50 instead of the $75 she had been earning weekly.

But such an arrangement did not prove very satisfactory. Powys demanded constant attention, sending lachrymose notes and letters to his wife whenever she was in New York, complaining how lonely he was without her. Thayer's growing suspicion of plots to sabotage the *Dial* added another morbid note to Gregory's life. Eventually, she put love before work and, insisting with her habitual diffidence that Moore would do a better job than she could, agreed to accompany Powys to England in April. Llewelyn Powys was ecstatic at this victory and begged his sister Gertrude to find them suitable lodgings. He assuaged his conscience by explaining that "Alyse . . . wants to finish a novel" (March 1925); but a few days later he wrote again: "It's disgraceful of me to have persuaded Alyse to give up the Dial but I WANT TO COME HOME." (Powys's capitals; 10 March 1925).

When Alyse Gregory decided to submit to her husband's pleas that they go to England, she was giving up a position in the New York literary world where she had thrived. The brownstone at 152 West 13th Street in Greenwich Village that housed the *Dial* had been almost a second home for her. The *Freeman* and the *Liberator* were close by, and most of bohemia's radicals and artists lived in the area. In Marianne Moore's memory, it was a pleasant three-story house, boldly bearing its name "in gold leaf block letters . . . on the windows to the right of the brownstone steps leading to the front door" ("The *Dial*" 357). Gregory, persnickety as ever, had been more critical; although the building boasted "spacious, square, homely rooms" she felt that "their casual collection of shabby furniture—[was] selected, apparently, as little for display as for efficiency" (*Day* 208). Nonetheless, she had immediately felt "at ease" in her new position, and quickly established a good working relationship with Sophia Wittenberg, who had started working for the *Dial* in 1920 as a stenographer and was now her assistant. Wittenberg was not only delightfully beautiful but "to add a touch of the incredible, she was efficient as well" (*Day* 208).

By the time Gregory joined the *Dial* it had already gained its reputation in the literary circles of the day. According to E.E. Cummings, winner of the Dial Award for 1925, Thayer and Watson had quickly transformed the magazine from "a dogooding periodical . . . into a first rate magazine of the fine arts" (qtd. in Norman 37). Later evaluations echo his enthusiasm (Hoffmann, Allen, and Ulrich 198-206). Thayer's policy of printing both the "inevitable" and the "impossible" was firmly established by this time, and he correctly assumed that in Gregory—granted her fastidious convictions—he had a staunch ally. During their discussions over submissions to the *Dial* at the literary tea shop she had managed for a time, and then at the sedately conducted but intellectually sparkling gatherings at her firesides, her self-trained mind had never failed to satisfy him. Her sincere approval of his aesthetic judgments further convinced Thayer of her fidelity to him and his magazine.

Rosemary Manning, Gregory's literary executor, believed that "Alyse . . . hated to wound, and would do anything to encourage, but it made her uncritical." This may have been so when Manning knew her in England, toward the end of her life, but in the twenties Alyse Gregory was certainly mistress of a pungent, critical style, which she exercised freely in her reviews, never sparing even those authors whom the *Dial* revered. Sherwood Anderson is a case in point. Although Anderson had received the first Dial Award of 1921, Thayer was by no means an undiscriminating devotee of his work. The November 1922 issue—which Joost believed to be "the most famous single issue" (*Scofield Thayer* 104)—included not only *The Waste Land* but also the second installment of Anderson's *Many Marriages.* Thayer, incensed by the errors, both typographical and of judgment, committed by Watson and Seldes in this issue, discharged his frustrations in letters to Gregory, who replied: "and I heartily second your description of Sherwood Anderson's latest work as 'stuff.' When will these writers ever grow up, and when will people stop pretending that they are grown up" (10 November 1922). A little later, she wrote, "I am thinking of writing an essay exploding the Sherwood Anderson bubble, but am biding my time" (21 January 1923).

Gregory did write such an essay. Although the *Dial* had honored Anderson with its award and published highly laudatory pieces on his writing, now, true to its policy of embracing all trends and opinions, it published her essay in the September 1923 issue. She was certainly not afraid to wound, nor too eager to encourage. In this wryly humorous piece she criticized not only Anderson's deep reliance on greater masters such as D. H. Lawrence but also his fitful style and his immature idealism. Gregory compared Anderson to Dreiser, another writer whom she scoffed at for his journalistic style, although she did acknowledge that he had "with strong flat hands prepared the ground for a more liberal treatment of sex in American literature." Now Anderson, "nervous and mystical, follows along like the anxious white rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland* clasping instead of a watch the latest edition of Sigmund Freud" ("Sherwood Anderson" 244).

In an essay on Paul Valéry she wrote: "It is the property, however, of distinguished literature to leave within the mind, side by side with a store of rich and fertile perspectives, questions that live on without an answer, questions that have, indeed, their odd separate flowerings" ("New Academician," 433). Sherwood Anderson's "bewildered whisper of inquiry" ("Sherwood Anderson" 243) inspired no such "flowerings" in Gregory's mind. It took writers such as Dostoevsky or Nietzsche, "great obliterator[s] of modern false values," to stimulate her ("Inflammable Slav" 606). As to style, Gregory was just as outspoken. At the same time that she admired H.D.'s poetry for her "fire," "restraint," and "devout paganism," she boldly criticized the prose of *Palimpsest,* which though "sumptuous and rich in imagery" was, for her, "frequently lacking in dignity, simplicity, and restraint." She continued:

> The short staccato sentences, clipped off and left standing like impudent, half-clothed intruders at a classic banquet, are of course indicative of the modern method and of H.D.'s obeisance before it. But to me they seem curiously unfitting, and indeed, not integral with her deeper individual perceptions.
> ("Poet's Novel" 418)

But she did not condemn all practitioners of the "modern method." She admired E.E. Cummings's wit and believed he had "something of the gnome in him—the unexpected, the utterly original, the zig-zag flight of a lapwing, and such almost Proustian receptivity so that his understanding is practically simultaneous with one's thought and before this thought has found words" (qtd. in Norman xii).

Gregory ends her review of H.D.'s *Palimpsest* with what amounts to a literary manifesto. Although it was not published until 1927, when she was no longer managing editor, it encapsulates her conviction of what literature should do:

> If, as is claimed by at least one critic, it is dishonest in an age of transition not to seek out fresh methods of technique, then I for one can but hope that without harm to subtlety it will in time be again original to be simple and carefully selective in the sense that Proust and Pater are simple and selective; that is, to think with heightened clarity of what one desires to express, and then so to condense and pack this burden that it can be carried undamaged, without stumbling or confusion, from page to page, portable and precise, to be at last deposited for the absorbed persuasion of the reader. ("Poet's Novel" 419)

This definition of literary excellence exemplifies Van Wyck Brooks's assertion that "the editors of the *Dial* were aesthetic or nothing" (66) and recalls the "intensity" that Gregory had learned to hide from her mother. Not surprisingly, Marianne Moore would later declare, when questioned on how the *Dial* was run, that "We certainly didn't have a policy, except I remember hearing the word 'intensity' very often. A thing must have 'intensity.' That seemed to be the criterion" ("Interview" 267).

However, certain norms did have to be observed. In 1922, in one of the letters in which he tries to convince Gregory to take over the managing editorship of the *Dial*, Thayer superciliously warns her that, given the recent losses in advertisers, he would have to insist that the magazine would "as far as possible not run any pictures that will irritate the semi-intelligent and semi-cultivated" (22 October 1922). In *The Day Is Gone,* Gregory tells how the magazine was always criticized, no matter what it did, "for being too orthodox, and on the other [hand], for being too experimental," but she insisted that it "sought to widen and instruct the taste of American readers, while encouraging native writers and poets with original talent to contribute to its pages" (209).

Indeed, as Gregory points out, a magazine owned by two young men such as Thayer and Watson, who put in huge amounts of money every year (the deficit for the September 1922 issue alone was $9,000) and thus were not particularly cowed by advertisers objecting to indecorous pictures, and who simply loved the idea of a stimulating literary magazine that would startle readers out of their customary complacency, was bound to come in for criticism. Although there were plenty of "little magazines" around, specializing in unknown poets and attempting to shock the reader in ways that, today, we can identify as modernist, the *Dial* led the way, interspersing original creative work with serious criticism of European and American innovations in art and paying thoughtful attention to artistic form.

Gregory's name appeared on the masthead as managing editor of the *Dial* from February 1924 to July 1925. Marianne Moore took over first as acting editor and then, from 1927, when Thayer's paranoia no longer allowed him to responsibly continue control of the *Dial,* as editor. He ended publication of the magazine in July 1929, when the lease on the brownstone that housed the offices expired.

Thayer's persecution mania had been steadily getting worse. In January 1926 he summoned Gregory, who was then living in England, to come to Vienna. He promised to return to England with her but fled from the station at the last minute. On 6 May 1926, Gregory, after receiving a series of accusatory telegrams, pleaded with Thayer to write to her, asking, "Did I fail you in some way when I was in Vienna?" After this, Moore seems to have taken Gregory's place as Thayer's confidante, though Gregory continued to correspond with him for some time.

Before she handed the *Dial* over to Marianne Moore, Gregory prepared a set of typed editorial instructions indicating the general procedure to be followed in making up an issue of the *Dial* and stipulating how much was to be paid to contributors. The layout of the magazine; the positioning of prose, poetry, and pictures; and the design of the cover had been very carefully worked out for the early issues of the new *Dial* by Thayer and Seldes by 1922, and this external appearance was generally maintained throughout the magazine's nine years of existence. Deviations from his original intentions aroused Thayer to tremendous wrath, which he vented on his staff either by letter or at monthly postmortems if he was in New York. On these occasions Watson would act as peacemaker; Gregory generously noted that his "quick and indulgent understanding offered balm to all" (*Day* 211).

When Moore took over from Gregory, she adhered strictly to her predecessor's guidelines as to format and continued the policy of careful reading and commenting on rejected manuscripts, which, given Gregory's "delicately lethal honesty" (Moore, "The *Dial*" 361) had incensed some but had also won warm words of gratitude from writers who, in spite of the rejection, felt encouraged. However, no corrections were ever made to an accepted piece without consulting the author, which often required special tact and diplomacy. Such was certainly the case with Paul Rosenfeld, who contributed the monthly "Musical Chronicle" (Joost, *Scofield Thayer* 142).

By the time Moore became editor, the *Dial* accepted little unsolicited material. Thayer, Watson, and Gregory had, even before Gregory officially joined the staff, established a stable of writers and artists whom they wanted to review and publish. Among Gregory's many tasks was the monthly selection and distribution of books to be reviewed, and although she certainly asked for Thayer's approval on some occasions, this seems to have been a mere formality. The section "Briefer Mention"—one-paragraph reviews of books recently published—was also hers to distribute among her literary friends. Both the long and the short reviews followed the pattern that Gregory favored: critical, intellectual, but impressionistic accounts of the reviewer's reaction to the text.

A typical example is Gregory's review of Evelyn Scott's autobiography *Escapade*. Here Gregory expresses her admiration of Rebecca West, May Sinclair, and Virginia Woolf, and laments that America can only offer an Evelyn Scott to compare with the British women. The review criticizes Scott's life and her telling of it as meaningless and uninstructive. It laments the "curious lack of fusion" in the style and the abundance of "similes [that] revert to various metal substances" but praises the author's determination to expose the "stuffiness and injustice" of the world (599).

Although Gregory had worked for women's suffrage and seems to have preferred to review books by women, she did not give them preferential treatment when it came to publication in the *Dial*. In the issues she edited, just as in the issues edited by Seldes or Moore, women contributors were in the minority. Virginia Woolf's fiction was published regularly—"Miss Ormerod," for example, in December 1924, and "The Lives of the Obscure" in May 1925. Evelyn Scott's short story "The Old Lady" was also published in May 1925, and although Gregory had already left the *Dial,* it is impossible to read the story and not be convinced that, with an uncanny prescience, she had selected it for publication. The story, whose protagonist reminds us of Anita Brookner's lonely spinsters, foreshadows Gregory's life in her later years, when she "wrote letters, to keep herself from growing 'stale'" (373). Other women who were published by the *Dial* include Mina Loy, Djuna Barnes, Lola Ridge, Genevieve Taggard, Meridel Le Sueur, and Gertrude Stein, the "brown buckram bean bag" (Thayer to Gregory 30 July 1921) whose poetry Thayer had rejected—although Moore did accept the essays "Composition as Explanation" (October 1928) and "A Long Gay Book" (September 1927).

Gregory's friendship with Moore dated back to December 1921, when Van Wyck Brooks and Paul Rosenfeld had brought Moore to tea. Gregory was immediately charmed by the poet's "slim figure almost like a jointed doll with her coil of beautiful reddish hair" but unsettled by her "little girl emotions," which she judged Moore adopted consciously in order to make it "possible to live with her mother" (Diary 4 December 1921). The mother herself provoked the following outcry in a letter to Thayer: "Only a person of her intellectual robustness could have survived such a mother. But perhaps her robustness has been developed as a shield. Mon dieu! What a *mother*" (8–9 December 1921; Gregory's italics). Although, as Gregory wrote to Thayer, the two women "could never really be intimate" (9 July 1922), Moore's generous offer to fill in for her when Powys became ill cemented their friendship. But Gregory recognized that Moore's conservative opinions on sex and suicide, so opposed to her own, as well as her exaggerated need for privacy, created a distance between them that she could not cross. In a letter to Thayer dated 9 July 1922 she wrote:

> One is invited animatedly to examine the contents of her small cabinets of knowledge and preferences, all so precisely, so completely labeled, everything so felicitously folded in for the right occasion but when one too inadvertently pushed her it is the shy school girl who surprisingly emerges, and there are so many possible inadvertent steps of that sort that one can take.

The fear to tread on personal ground must have been mutual. On Gregory's death, for example, K. A. Ward asked Moore to contribute to a booklet of memoirs that he planned to publish. Her response was immediate but largely impersonal. Gregory, she writes, was "innately literary. . . . It seemed strange to me that anyone could be accomplished as she was and have no inconvenient prides or sense of superiority (*Alyse Gregory* 1–2).

Moore's admiration for Gregory's writing is apparent in her review of *Hester Craddock,* the novel Gregory wrote while her husband was trying to have a child by Gamel Woolsey, an aspiring poet. Woolsey, also consumptive, either miscarried or had to terminate each pregnancy for health reasons. She would become Gregory's very close friend in later years, but at that time Gregory, who in theory accepted her husband's extramarital affairs, was torn by the conflicting emotions of affection for Woolsey and jealousy of Powys's love. Gregory certainly contemplated suicide and had probably decided to put an end to her life if Woolsey rejected Gerald Brenan's offer of marriage and clung instead to Powys. In the section of her diary that covers these years, published posthumously as *The Cry of a Gull,* she frequently speculates on the effect that her death would have on the two lovers. The entry for 2 May 1931, when she heard that Woolsey had finally committed herself to Brenan, reads: "That day, the day when Gamel was probably married, was mine" (49).

Hester Craddock, although not autobiographical in plot, draws on Gregory's conflicting emotions as it studies how physical features affect the two principal characters—the hunchback writer who reminds one of Randolph Bourne and the young girl, Hester, who considers herself ugly in comparison with her beautiful older sister. Jealousy and desire for revenge lead these two dark Hawthornian souls to manipulate and destroy those they love. Moore believed that in this novel "one feels . . . the presence of an important mind" and admired its "originality" ("Saturated" 277). Although she objected to some "mannerisms" and "certain wordings," she still declared that the writing "is so good that it is not necessary that it should be flawless" (279).

Gregory published two novels prior to *Hester Craddock*, both based on her own experiences. *She Shall Have Music* reflects her adolescent longings and sexual awakening, while *King Log and Lady Lea* can be read as an attempt to come to terms with the pain that Powys's infidelities caused her. In view of the skillful crafting of these novels, their poetical language and psychological insight, it is a pity that Gregory did not write more fiction. Once she had left the *Dial* and allowed all her experience to be "contained in the figure of her husband"—as the protagonist of *King Log and Lady Lea* reflects (5)—she had little stimulus to continue writing. We can only lament that she allowed Powys to draw her away from the *Dial*. Perhaps she did so because she found working for Thayer too nerve-wracking and because she sincerely wanted to care for Powys, with whom, in spite of his numerous affairs, she found the companionship she sought. But the last paragraph of *The Day Is Gone,* written in 1948, is revealing. Implying that her work on the *Dial* was the culminating experience of her life, she ends her autobiography in 1924:

> Into what delightful paths had my days at last carried me! Surrounded by sympathetic people, subjected to the dilemmas incident only upon making nice aesthetical judgments, with young men and old paying me artful compliments, in touch with minds original and imaginative—the pick of all Europe and America—what higher fortune could I desire. (212)

After she left the *Dial*, Gregory lived in England, a lonely expatriate. Powys died in 1939, when Gregory was only 55. She continued writing but found it difficult to publish in England during the war. Eventually she hid away in Morebath, a quiet Devonshire village, wrote letters, and read widely. In August 1967, recognizing that her health was failing, she took her own life. Perhaps she had foreseen what marriage would bring when, explaining her convictions on the subject to Thayer, she had written:

> I wish to announce solemnly now like Renan, that I must never be believed in my old age if I refute them, my present true convictions which are in favour of all and every irregularity in sex, infidelity, experience, experience, experience, freedom! anything and everything but static normality. (8 October 1924)

Her life was certainly neither "static" nor normal, and she should be remembered for her convictions, for her novels, and above all for her contribution to the *Dial*, where she, as much as Thayer and Watson, "helped to extend the audience for that burst of talent now called Modernism" (True 5).

Notes

1. Donald Hall does not acknowledge Gregory as Moore's predecessor. Hoffmann, Allen, and Ulrich give a grudging reference to her work as an editorial assistant and follow that up with an aside on her marriage to Llewelyn Powys (201). Robert Morss Lovett does not mention Gregory at all, although his essay "The Squire in Politics" was published in November 1924, when she was managing editor. Nicholas Joost in *Scofield Thayer,* however, does give an account of Gregory's participation in the editing and running of the magazine.

2. For Gregory's ideas on marriage see "The Dilemma of Marriage."

3. Gregory had written advertising copy in one of her many jobs before she devoted herself seriously to literature, and both the advertisements published by the *Dial* and the advertising of the review itself were areas in which Thayer considered Seldes incompetent.

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